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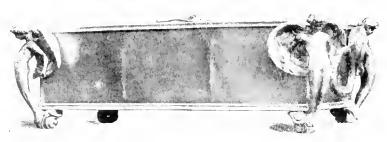
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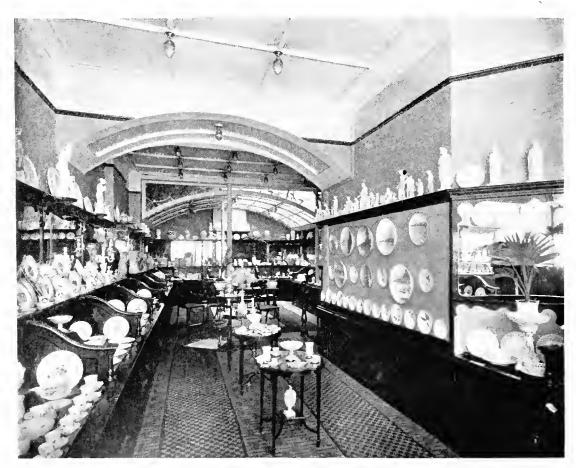


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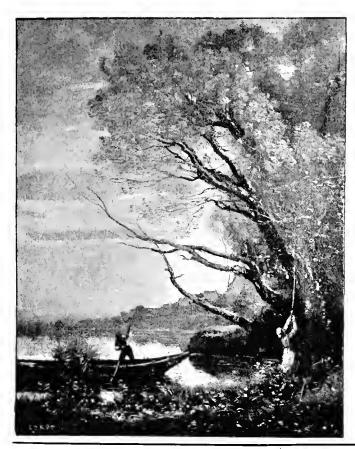
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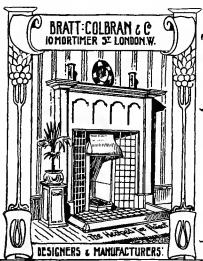


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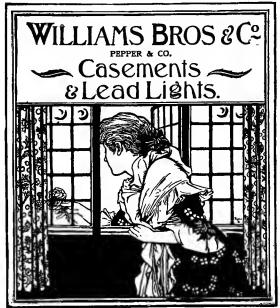
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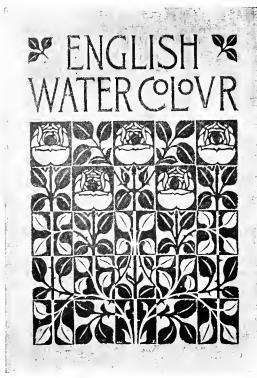
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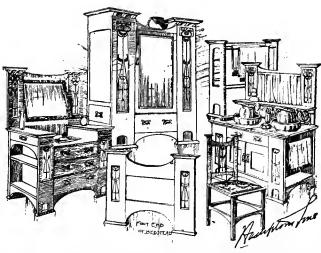
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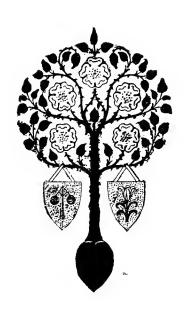
COROT AND MILLET

WITH CRITICAL ESSAYS BY GUSTAVE GEFFROY & ARSÈNE ALEXANDRE



EDITED BY CHARLES HOLME

JOHN LANE, OFFICES OF THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO, 67 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK MCMIII



PREFACE

A man confronted with the array of work in this volume feels it unnecessary to write a prefatory note on the arts of Corot and Millet. It is a volume that explains itself; it asks for no introduction. the Editor, in issuing it to the public, desires to offer his cordial thanks to all who have helped in its preparation, beginning with the authors, M. Gustave Geffroy and M. Arsène Alexandre, whose admirable essays lose but little of their style in the sympathetic translations by Mr. Edgar Preston. Mr. F. Keppel, after long study of the subject, has written the notes on the etchings of Millet. collectors who have kindly lent work for reproduction include Sir Matthew Arthur, Bart., Mr. Alexander Young, Mr. W. A. Coats, Mr. A. T. Reid, Mr. Charles Ricketts, Mr. Morley Pegge, Mr. Alexander MacBride, Mr. W. Pitcairn Knowles, Dr. T. W. T. Lawrence, Mr. James Arthur, Monsieur Henri Rouart, and Monsieur Léon Bonnat. Much assistance has also been received from Messrs. William Marchant & Co., Messrs. Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell, Mr. R. Gutekunst, Mr. E. van Wisselingh, Mr. F. Keppel, Messrs. C. Klackner & Co., Messrs. Braun, Clément & Co., the Société Anonyme des Galeries Georges Petit, Messrs. Durand-Ruel et Fils, Messrs. Carfax & Co., the Autotype Company, Messrs. Obach & Co., Messrs. Cottier & Co., Messrs. Hollander and Cremetti, and the Proprietors of the French Gallery, London.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CAMILLE COROT

OIL PAINTINGS.			"Pool at Ville d'Avray"	c 26
"Music and Art"	С	1	"Le Parc des Lions à Mont-	
"The Wounded Eurydice"	С	2	Marly "	c 28
" Mother and Child	С	3	"Old Cottage near Semeur"	c 29
"The Bather"	С	4	"Le Lac d'Albano"	c 30
"Cottage Interior—Limousin"	c	5	"The Castle of Wagnouville"	с 31
"Tivoli, seen from the Villa		,	"The Bathers"	c 32
d'Éste ''	С	6	"Trees and Pond"	c 33
"Hagar in the Wilderness"	С	7	"The Bent Tree"	c 34
" Italian Landscape"	c	8	"Peasant Riding"	c 35
"Château Thierry"	С	9	"Women Bathing"	_с 36
"Near Arras"	С	10	"The Tower"	C 45
"View of Rome"	c	11	Decorative Painting.	
"The Great Oak at Fontaine-			"Don Quixote and Cardenio"	c 27
bleau ''		12	Bon Suixote and Cardenio	C 2/
"A Gust of Wind"		13	CHARCOAL DRAWINGS.	
"Evening Glow"		14	"Landscape Study"	c 37
"Orpheus"	C	15	"Landscape Study"	c 38
"Farmyard at Coubron"	С	16	"Souvenir d'Italie"	c 39
"The Canal at St. Quentin"	C	17	"Landscape Study"	c 40
"The Bridge"	C	18		
"Souvenir d'Italie"	С	19	Etchings.	
"The Goat-herd"	C	20	"Souvenir de Toscane"	C 4I
"Peasants near a Lake"	C	2 I	" Italian Landscape"	C 42
"Goat-herd Piping"	C	22	"Boat under the Willows"	c 43
"The Lake"	C	23	"The Pool at Ville d'Avray"	C 44
"Dance of Nymphs"	C	24	"A Wooded Country"	c 46
"Women Bathing"	C	25	"Souvenir d'Italie"	c 47
JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLE	Γ			
CRAYON STUDIES.			"The Angelus"	м 7
"A Siesta"	M	I	"The Travellers"	м 8
"Threshing"	M		"Goat-herd and Goats"	м 9
"The Stile"	M		"Calling in the Herd"	M IO
"Potato Planting"	N		// T 1' 11	M II
"The Potato Harvest"	N	•	"The Calf"	M I 2
"Woman Pasturing a Cow"	N			M 12
	47		~ ^ ^ A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A	171 1 4

JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET—continued

M	14	PEN DRAWINGS.		
M	15	"The Sower"	M	44
M	16	"Mother and Son"	M	60
M	17	Etchings.		
M	1 8		M	46
_М	19			48
M	20			46
M	2 I			50
M	22	_		5 I
M	23			52
M	24	"A Shepherdess Seated"		53
M	25	-		54
M	26	"Trial Sketches"		55
M	27	"The Two Cows"		56
		"The Seaweed Gatherers"		56
				59
				61
M	4 7			
			М	57
M	28	_		J.
M	29		М	62
				63
				64
			14.	ΥТ
		"Girl Drawing Water	M	65
		Woodcuts.		
M	36	"Faggoting"	M	66
			M	67
M	38	" Reaping "	M	68
		"Flax-pulling"	M	69
M	41	<u> </u>	M	70
M	42	"Flax-crushing"	M	7 I
M	43	" Mowing "	M	72
M	45	"Raking"	M	73
	M M M M M M M M M M M M M M M M M M M	M 14 M 15 M 16 M 17 M 18 M 19 M 20 M 21 M 22 M 23 M 24 M 25 M 26 M 27 M 35 M 40 M 47 M 28 M 29 M 30 M 31 M 32 M 33 M 34 M 36 M 37 M 38 M 39 M 41 M 42 M 43 M 45	M 15 "The Sower" M 16 "Mother and Son" M 17 ETCHINGS. M 18 "Woman Sewing" M 20 "Man with a Wheelbarrow" M 21 "Peasants Starting for Work" M 22 "Shepherd-Girl Spinning" M 23 "Trial Sketches" M 24 "A Shepherdess Seated" M 25 "Two Men Digging" M 26 "Trial Sketches" M 27 "The Two Cows" "The Seaweed Gatherers" M 35 "The Vigil" M 40 "Digger Resting" M 47 DRYPOINT. "Sheep and Cow Grazing" M 28 WATER-COLOURS. M 29 "The Peacemaker" M 30 "Landscape Study" M 31 "Landscape Study" M 32 "Girl Drawing Water" WOODCUTS. M 36 "Faggoting" M 37 "Trussing" M 38 "Reaping" M 39 "Flax-pulling" M 41 "Shearing" M 42 "Flax-crushing" M 43 "Mowing"	M 15 "The Sower" M M 16 "Mother and Son" M M 17 ETCHINGS. M 18 "Woman Sewing" M M 19 "Churning" M M 20 "Man with a Wheelbarrow" M M 21 "Peasants Starting for Work" M M 22 "Shepherd-Girl Spinning" M M 23 "Trial Sketches" M M 24 "A Shepherdess Seated" M M 25 "Two Men Digging" M M 26 "Trial Sketches" M M 27 "The Two Cows" M M 27 "The Two Cows" M M 35 "The Vigil" M M 40 "Digger Resting" M M 40 "Digger Resting" M M 47 DRYPOINT. "Sheep and Cow Grazing" M M 30 "Landscape Study" M M 31 "Landscape Study" M M 32 HELIOGRAPH ON GLASS. "Girl Drawing Water" M WOODCUTS. M 36 "Faggoting" M M 37 "Trussing" M M 39 "Flax-pulling" M M 39 "Flax-pulling" M M 41 "Shearing" M M 42 "Flax-crushing" M M 43 "Mowing" M M 43 "Mowing" M M 44 "Shearing" M M 44 "Flax-crushing" M M 45 "Mowing" M M 46 "Mowing" M M 47 "Mowing" M M 48 "Mowing" M M 49 "Mowing" M M 40 "Mowing" M M 41 "Mowing" M M 41 "Mowing" M M 42 "Mowing" M M 43 "Mowing" M M 44 "Mowing" M M 45 "Mowing" M M 46 "Mowing" M M 47 "Mowing" M M 48 "Mowing" M M 49 "Mowing" M M 49 "Mowing" M M 40 "Mowing" M M 40 "Mowing" M M 41 "Mowing" M M 42 "Mowing" M M 43 "Mowing" M M 44 "Mowing" M M 45 "Mowing" M M 46 "Mowing" M M 47 "Mowing" M M 48 "Mowing" M M 49 "Mowing" M M 49 "Mowing" M M 40 "Mowing" M M 40 "Mowing "Mowing M M 40 "Mowing "Mowing M M 40 "Mowing M

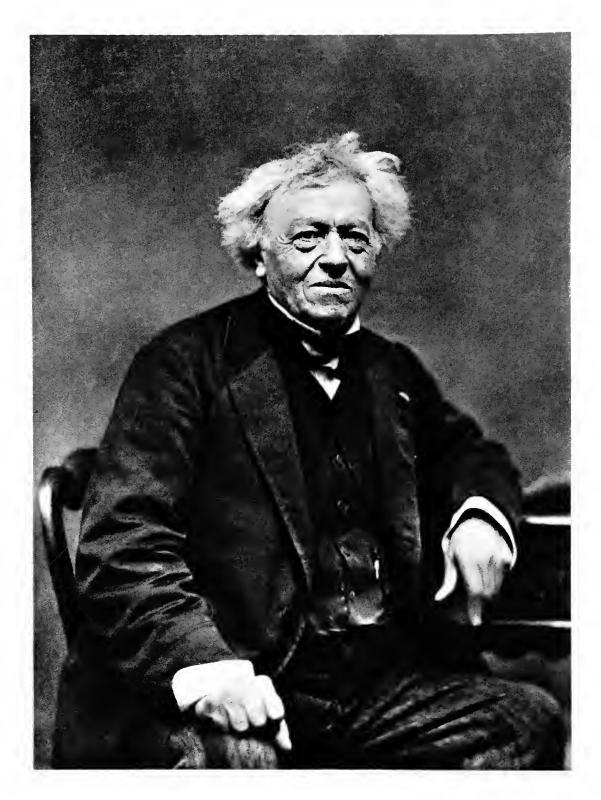
LIST OF SPECIAL PLATES NOT INCLUDED IN THE FOREGOING

CAMILLE COROT

"Portrait of Camille Corot." A Reproduction in			
Photogravure Frontispiece	e to Co	rot Mo	nograph
"Environs de Rome, 1866." From the Original Etching	facing	page	viii
"The Pool." A Reproduction in Colours	,,	"	xvi
"The Lake." A Reproduction in Photogravure	,,	"	xxiv
"Peasants near a Pool." A Reproduction in Tints	,,	,,	xxxii
"At the End of the Valley." A Reproduction in Colours	,,	с 9	
"View of Ville d'Avray." A Reproduction in Photogravure	,,	c 19	
"L'Heure Matinale." A Reproduction in Colours	,,	c 27	
"The Pathway to the Church." A Reproduction in Colours	,,	c 35	

JEAN FRANÇOIS MILLET

"Portrait of J. F. Millet." From the Drawing by		
Himself Frontispiece	to Mille	t Monograph
"Ver-Vert, the Parrot of the Nuns." A Reproduction in		
Colours	facing	page 1V
"The Sower." From the Original Lithograph	,,	", viii
"A Shepherdess Knitting." A Photogravure after the		
Original Etching	,,	" xvi
"The Happy Family." In Facsimile of the Original Drawing	53	M 4
"The Bather." A Reproduction in Tints	"	м 8
"La Soupe." From the Original Etching	,,	м 16
"Carding Wool." From the Original Etching	,,	M 2I-22
"The Woodsawyers." A Reproduction in Photogravure	,,	м 27
"Gleaning." From the Original Etching	13	м 35-36
"A Shepherdess Seated." From the Original Woodcut	,,	м 46-47
"The Shepherdess." A Reproduction in Photogravure	,,	м 59





JEAN-BAPTISTE CAMILLE COROT. By GUSTAVE GEFFROY.



HE life story of Corot tells itself all the world over. One recognises it in the public gallery, in the private collection, in the drawing-room where one of his canvases hangs on the wall. That life-story is his work—those moist, quivering, luminous paintings in which there is water and herbage, trees and clouds, with light rising or sinking on the horizon, a presentiment or a memory of the sunshine, a sweet harmony of

moonlight and stars, a silvered reflection speaking amid the silence. Each one of these canvases speaks for Corot, and the night. and says to us: "That day, that morning, that evening, or that night I was here, before this pool, this wood, this plain, this field, or this house. I stood under the gloomy sky, full of tears of rain. On this sad grey visage I saw the divine smile of light arise; saw fall a shower of infinite softness, gleaming with the sun's own gold, and the sound of those rain-drops falling on the leaves was exquisite. 'Twas Spring complete, in its awakening, its perfume, its colour, its sound. Anon it was the wind, come from afar, hurrying through the valley, bending the trees, rustling the foliage, scattering the leaves, and ruffling the waters. Everything responded to the same movement, in the same way, and I strove to follow the rapid flight of the landscape, which, though keeping its place, seemed to be wildly hurrying by. 'Twas Autumn complete, with its breath of decay, its death-rattle, its farewell. Peace I found once more within this moon-lit glade, with a trace of daylight still lingering above the forest tops. That night I thought I saw the hamadryads starting from the trees, and the nymphs dancing among the ferns."

Other works, neither landscapes nor figure-pieces, might utter other confidences: "For the most part they are humble creatures—girls and women—I have depicted. I had met them in the street in their Italian garb, or in their servants' clothes; or maybe they had come to my studio to ask if I wanted models. I never sent them away. In them I saw the beauty of life. That beauty is in every living creature, in everything that breathes, just as it is in everything which is impregnated with life. It has given me as much pleasure to paint these women as to paint my landscapes. On their flesh the poem of

the hours has unfolded itself as beautiful, as enchanting, as on the soil, the waters, the hills, and the trees. The mystery of the woods was in their hair; the mystery of the sky and of the still pools in their eyes. So too, Spring and Autumn passed before me when they smiled, joyously or sadly. And their simple speech would ever bring to my eyes the dancing of the nymphs."

Thus, and doubtless far better, do Corot's paintings speak to such as look at them and listen to what they say. Each recounts an hour of his life, the moment when he was charmed, ravished, dazzled by the poetry of things,—by some forest-glade in Artois, by some pond at Ville d'Avray, or by the supple body of some woman near him. Therein was his life, his real life, his whole life indeed, for all the time he passed away from his easel he would spend, whether he were alone or in conversation with others, in dreaming, in spite of himself, so to speak, of the relations, the harmonies, existing between the things he saw everywhere around him, the things he had reproduced yesterday, that he was about to reproduce that very day, and on the morrow, and on all the morrows right to the end. A man, an artist, of this sort, possessing the gift of seeing and the gift of creating anew, is never completely free to think of aught else but his art. Even when not deliberately thinking of it he really is doing so, unknown to himself. These haunted brains are for ever weaving schemes in secret.

But I must tell of the exterior of this life, gathering together the traits of which it was made up, and collecting the words spoken or written by Corot and by those who knew, admired, and discussed him. For all this too has its interest, inasmuch as it assists one to understand his work, and to follow its formation, its variations, its gradations.

I have before me one of the latest portraits of Corot—a photograph. The features are clearly marked. The brow, high and bare, crowned with hair in the coup de vent style, is furrowed with lines. His glance goes clear, keen, direct, from beneath the heavy eyelids. The nose, short and fleshy, is attached to the cheeks by two strongly marked creases. There is a smile on the lips, of which the lower is very thick—altogether, a good, intelligent, witty face. Nothing to suggest a life of struggles, of alternations of hope and despair. Corot was indeed spared such a life, for his family, although failing to understand him, supplied him with means sufficient to enable him to preserve his liberty. In truth he could not have desired more.

At the corner of the Rue du Bac and the Quai d'Orsay, opposite c ii

the Pont Royal, there stood more than a hundred years ago a little shop with a sign-board bearing these words in yellow paint:

MME. COROT, MARCHANDE DE MODES.

It was a well-frequented shop. Mme. Corot, assisted by several capable girls, created new models, while her husband, an office clerk, spent his days in town among the day-books and ledgers appertaining to the book-keeping system of the business houses of the period. It was amid these quiet but businesslike surroundings, in this atmosphere of prudent, steady, middle-class existence, that Jean-Baptiste Camille was born on the 28th of July, 1796 (10 Thermidor, Year IV.). The birth of the child made no particular change in the life of the parents, who already had a daughter, two years of age. M. Jean Louis Corot continued to keep his accounts and strike his balances. Only for a few days did Mme. Corot neglect her elegant combinations of tulle and ribbons, ruches and hat shapes. The boy was sent to a primary school, where he won some successes, and on the 15th of December, 1806, obtained a "bourse nationale," or scholarship, which enabled him in the April following to enter a lycée at Rouen, where he had as correspondant a M. Jeunegon, living at No. 90, Rue Beauvoisine.

Here, in the provinces, young Camille, real Parisian as he was, first became acquainted with the bitters of life. He was home-sick. longed for his family, for Paris, and for the pavement of the quays, for the Tuileries, for the Seine-which is not the same thing at Rouen—for the Louvre, stretching its noble lines right in front of his home in the Rue du Bac. His studies at the time reveal his state of mind. It appears from notes preserved in the archives of the lycée that the first class he went through was what is known as "the second year of grammar," which corresponds with the fifth at present; he even went as far as the belles-lettres classes (rhetoric). His name does not once appear in the lists of honours, not even in drawing. Nevertheless he got through his "humanities" by the 29th of June, 1812, and returned to Paris. Here his father placed him with a marchand de nouveautés, M. Ratier, with whom he stayed a year, and then with a draper in the Rue Saint-Honoré, a M. Delalain.

It was not long-cloth young Corot wanted, but canvas—canvas stretched on a frame-work, ready to be daubed. The yard-measure has no kinship with the brush, and druggets from Sedan or Elbœuf have as little connection with palette and colours.

One of Corot's biographers, M. Alfred Robaut, tells a story which

may be given here:

"One day," he remarks, "when I was in Corot's studio, there entered a father with his son, the former exclaiming: 'Monsieur Corot, here's a young man of whom your friend M. X— will have spoken to you. He threatens to upset the happiness of the whole family. I wanted to secure a position for him, something solid which should provide for his existence; but he, on the contrary, has taken it into his head to become a painter! Now I ask you, Monsieur Corot, is it reasonable?—for I was assured I might rely on your advice.'

"'H'm, h'm,' replied the painter, placing his pipe on the edge of his easel, 'this is serious, sir, very serious! But come, did this young

man finish his studies?'

"' Nearly,' answered the father.

"'And since then?'

"'Ah, Monsieur Corot, nothing that's much good! Six years ago I put him in business, and that didn't suit him. He was always scribbling behind his master's counter, and then——'

"Corot, ready to burst with laughter, bit his lip and exclaimed: 'Why, that's my own story you're telling me. . . . That's absolutely what happened to me; and, if you like, I will tell you the rest. . . '" "The rest," in Corot's case, may be told in a few lines. M. Delalain, discovering that his assistant had no aptitude for sedentary work, made him a sort of town-traveller. Carrying a parcel of patterns, wrapped up in water-proof cloth, Corot went from street to street. among the retail dealers, doing his work, but doubtless doing it. badly, for the result was very meagre. Many a time his employer. met him in the street, gazing at the pictures and prints in the shop. windows, and shifting from place to place in order to get a better . view, sometimes putting his parcel on the ground to shade his eyes. with both hands; as often as he possibly could do so he went into. the Louvre. At such times Corot was far away from all thought of his sales or the profit he might make out of them. Little cared he either for the lessons his master had given him in the art of disposing of his goods, especially that of getting rid of old-fashioned damaged stuff at the highest possible price—principles altogether repugnant to the honest conscience of the lad, who could not understand why one should be at such pains to entrap other people. "But that's business!" replied M. Delalain, "Ah, you'll never have the commercial spirit!"

No, as will soon be seen, Corot was never to have the shopkeeper's c iv

temperament. M. Corot père, pulled one way by the boy's master, who declared he could make nothing of his assistant, harassed on the other hand by the boy himself, riding his painting hobby more furiously than ever, dreaming only of frames and easels, mahlsticks, brushes, and palettes—M. Corot père at last decides, at the end of eight years, to go into the matter, and see what can be done for his nuisance of a son. A solemn council is held in the backshop in the Rue du Bac; the state of the family exchequer is examined, and it is found possible to detach an allowance of 1500 francs in favour of Camille, it being resolved that in no case is this amount to be exceeded.

The lad was full of thanks, and, deeply moved, declared himself to be the happiest of beings. But the realisation of his dream produced a sort of stupor. I do not believe that Corot, now that he was free, had any anxiety about what he was losing, about the magasin de nouveautés and his set of patterns. Nevertheless, he has related how, after having obtained his parents' consent to become a painter, he would walk about the quays, day after day, his portfolio under his arm, but doing absolutely nothing. However, he soon made up his mind. Installing himself by the Port Saint-Nicolas, near the spot where to-day the London steamer is moored, he began to paint the landscape of the City, as seen through the mist and smoke floating like a transparent veil over the river.

What has become of his early efforts? Probably they are covered by other paintings; perhaps they repose beneath some landscape at present adorning the walls of some museum or private dwelling. Several lithographs, beyond discovery now, also date from this period, notably a Kermesse Flamande, La Garde meurt et ne se rend pas, and La Peste de Barcelone.

While the great artist that is to be is feeling his way—his resigned family showing no interest in his work, which they regard as vain and useless—his efforts are followed with interest by his mother's shop assistants. The young work-girls escape from the shop whenever they can, and cross the bridge to satisfy their curiosity. Corot, who sometimes recalled these memories, used to say that one of the girls, Mlle. Rose, "came more often than her companions"; and he added: "She is still alive; she has remained unmarried and pays me a visit from time to time. Last week she was here. Oh, my friends, what a change! and what reflections it arouses! My painting has not budged; it is still young, it tells the hour and the weather of the day when I did it—but Mlle. Rose and I myself, what are we?"

Corot entered the studio of Achille Michallon, master and pupil. being just the same age. The former, educated by David, vid Bertin, belonged to the school which sought to discover the life of human beings by searching into the souls of statues, which studied Nature's secrets with the aid of the pedagogue methods of the atelier. Corot showed afterwards a picture he had painted at Michallon's, and happily described it as "rather a study in submission than in painting." His master ordered him to be "exact and punctual," and, more submissive in art than in commerce, he obeyed.

Michallon died in 1822, and Corot went off to seek Victor Bertin, who consented to take him. Michallon had preserved something of an open mind and a certain desire to be inspired by Nature, but Bertin, like all David's satellites, swore by antique art, and by that alone—that art, so far as they were concerned, consisting in draping models, rigging them up with a helmet, and arming them with sword and lance and shield and quiver, and fixing them in a landscape of artificial trees where torrents of spun glass fall from mountains of cardboard and stuffed beasts roar. Such was the traditional landscape, and France particularly excelled therein at the commencement of the nineteenth century, when her landscapists refused to look at Nature. At that time "Nature" simply meant a hilly. background, or a couple of trees, or a motionless stream—mere. accessories of a scene of biblical or Roman history. had at once been admitted and encouraged. The government of the day consecrated these artistic horrors by a national decree. was decided that the artist who should best succeed in building a temple on a rock should be rewarded by a permission to stay at the Ecole de Rome. And this was Michallon's triumph. The academician who about that time published the famous pamphlet, entitled "Revue critique des productions de peinture, sculpture, gravure exposées au Salon de 1824, par M. —," expressed to perfection that hatred of the real and that love of the false which were then the characteristics of the historical landscapist. "What," he exclaims, "would become of the landscapist's art if, through overtimidity, he feared to burst into the domain of history? What poetry, what high inspiration, could fire him, and sustain him in his labours? Continually trees and shrubs, and air and space and surface—what do I care for all these things if the artist do not throw upon these objects some sentiment of living animated nature, if he do not invest them alternately with sadness or serenity, violence or calm?" Painting was in full agreement with this sort of writing-all Homer's warriors, all Virgil's shepherds, all the

peplums, all the buskins, all the firemen's helmets, made their appearance in front of the colonnades among the sham verdure.

The animals of mythology came to drink at the springs.

The most guilty of these manufacturers of history, these falsifiers of Nature, were Bertin, Valenciennes, Michallon, Bidault, Watelet, together with Aligny, Flandrin, and Desgosses. It was against these men and their teaching that Constable, Bonington, Rousseau, Huet,. Dupré, Corot, Diaz, Millet, Daubigny, Michel, Courbet went in . revolt, all inspired by the longing to rehabilitate that which the academician of 1824 had proscribed-" trees and shrubs, and air and space and surface."

Young Corot spent two winters amid these strange artistic surroundings. Of all this he retained but little—that little being a tendency towards classic themes, a style of composition made up of mythology and Nature. But, like Poussin, he redeemed it by close observation of reality, by breathing life into his work, and he was destined soon to attain complete freedom. Corot's career is well * summed up in this extract from a letter addressed by him to one of his biographers: "Till eighteen I was at the Rouen College, then I. spent eight years in business; unable to stand this any longer I. became a landscape painter, at first as a pupil of Michallon... Losing him I went into the studio of Victor Bertin. Since then I

have thrown myself, all alone, on Nature, et voilà !"

He had learned so little in Paris that when he arrived in Rome, whither Bertin had sent him "to perfect himself," he realised that he "couldn't manage even the smallest drawing." "Two men would stop to chat," he remarked to Theophile Silvestre, one of his biographers. "I would begin to sketch them bit by bit, starting. with the head, for instance. Then they would part, and all I had. on my paper was sundry bits of heads. Or children would be sitting on the steps of some church, and again I would begin, only for their mother to call them away. Thus my sketch-book was full. of tips of noses, foreheads, and locks of hair. I resolved for the future not to go home without having done a complete work, and for the first time I essayed drawing in the mass, rapid drawing—the only drawing possible. I set myself to take in a group at a glance; if it stayed for a short time only at least I had got its character, its general unconscious attitude; if it remained long I could add the details. I have done this very often, and I have even succeeded in catching in a moment, with just a few strokes, the general impression of a ballet and its surroundings at the opera, just on a scrap of paper inside my hat."

Here is a clear lesson, summarising Corot's whole method—a lesson from which one may extract the definition of his artistic system, namely, to seize the movement of things, the passing life of humanity, the quivering of the branches, the spontaneity of a gesture; to express all this by an image fixing the fugitive impression of life. What Corot did not tell was his secret with regard to the fluid atmosphere, the soft and resplendent light which envelop men and things. This secret he possessed without having the power to analyse or define it; it was his innate sense of the sunlight, of the breath of the air, of human movement, of the swing of the branches, of the respiration of the plants, of the particles exhaled, attracted, or rejected by the earth—in a word, his innate sense of all that constitutes life.

In Rome Corot resumed the strolling life he had led in Paris. He sauntered along the banks of the Tiber, climbed the hills, pausing before the ancient temples in ruins which crown the Aventine where the vines and laurels grow, making sketches for the little canvases to be sent later to the exhibitions. Two of these pictures are now in the Louvre.

· He became friendly with several students at the Villa Médicis— Léopold Robert (who had given up painting for sculpture), Edouard Bertin, Dupré, Bodinier, Schnetz, Lapito, Delaberge, and Aligny. The little group used to meet in Corot's tiny room, which was so narrow that he had to perch his models on his trunk. They also frequented the Café del Greco or the Restaurant della Lepre. . smoked their pipes and drank and chatted, and Corot, witty and jovial then as in after years, did not scorn to listen to the advice of his comrades. They naturally were in favour of historical landscape, but, a little uneasy, began to be interested in the new formulæ, which had just been ingenuously brought to light by the painters Valenciennes and J. B. Deperthes. Both these artists were inspired by the works of Nicolas Poussin and Claude Gelée, and believed in the necessity of faithfully reproducing Nature. Deperthes recalled the fact that Poussin kept in his studio "moss and plants, flowers and pebbles, of which he made painted studies for the purpose of enriching his idealist compositions, and giving an air of verisimilitude thereto." He also told how Lorrain "spent his days and part of his nights watching the dawn, the sunrise, the sunset, and the twilight; how he engraved on his memory what he had seen, and on returning to his studies hastened to put his recollections on canvas, these recollections being expressed with so much truth and precision that one would have taken them for Nature herself, decked in all her charms."





Corot utilised all this instruction to good purpose. He did not trust to his memory, but fixed his impressions at the moment he received them. Aligny met him once on the Palatine Hill, engaged in painting a study for his picture of *The Coliseum*, now in the Louvre, and was so struck by the air of life about the whole thing, the purity of the sky and the limpidity of the atmosphere, that he had to sound its praises again and again to escape being taxed with irony. From that day forward the students ceased to treat Corot as an amateur, and Aligny declared that there was something to be gained in meeting such an associate.

In 1827 Corot sent from Rome to the Paris Salon his picture, called The Roman Campagna ("Campagne de Rome"), and another, Vue

prise à Narni.

The first of these canvases has been covered up by another painting. The "Guide de l'Amateur à l'Exposition de 1827-28," published by a certain "Société de gens de lettres et d'artistes," criticised it in the following terms: "It is impossible that the artist can have painted from Nature, for in that case he would have done otherwise: there is nothing fixed in his composition, but tones that are quite abrupt, tints merging into violet. . . . It seems to us we might have been given a better idea of the Roman Campagna. However, M. Corot is a painter of merit."

La Vue prise à Narni remained in possession of the artist. At the sale which took place after his death it was knocked down to M.

Lemaître for 2300 francs.

Several biographers have stated that Corot returned from Rome in 1827 by desire of his family. That is not so. He went back at the end of 1828. Here is the letter which fixes the date of his return, and gives some interesting details of the artist's life and character.

"Rome, the 27th of March, 1828.

"My DEAR MONSIEUR DUVERNEY,

"I have been a long time answering your kind letter of September last. It gave me great pleasure. So you think I have made some progress; that will encourage me, and I am going to continue steadily striving in my last campaign. It is true enough that the further one advances the more difficulties one meets. There are certain parts of painting, as I should like to treat them, which seem to me to be unconquerable. So much so that I dare not approach the pictures which I sketched at the beginning of the

c ix

winter. The weather has been continuously fine, and I have preferred to be out of doors. I could not keep in my studio. I contemplate leaving Italy in the month of September next, and returning to Paris; and there, after having embraced you all, I propose to devote myself seriously to these pictures. You may imagine how happy I shall be, surrounded by my family and my friends, working at my paintings, no longer distracted by lovely sky and lovely scenes. I shall be entirely engrossed in it, and when my work is over I shall have in prospect a happy evening to divert and refresh me for the morrow. A dozen years ago I dreamt of this happiness; now it is within my reach; may Fate not rob me of it!

"I purpose going to Naples in the month of May to spend some time. Thence I shall come back to the outskirts of Rome, where I shall still endeavour to seek out the power and the grace of Nature. I shall be very happy if I am able to bring back a few studies more satisfying in their execution. I shall try to do fewer and better.

"At the present moment in Rome I am doing other studies—costumes, painted and drawn, also a few compositions while I am in this country. If one only knew how I am taken up with my work my neglect might perhaps be forgiven. When you see in Paris all I have done you will congratulate me on it, persuaded as you are that I have no facility of execution.

"One of my comrades has just received a petit journal of the Salon— 'M. Corot: 221, 222, colouring good, piquant effect, transparency; we recommend him to draw better and to vary the forms of his trees.' After all that, I haven't much to complain of so far as the Salon is concerned. Now, this is not everything; I must not stay where I am; I shall be to blame if I do not advance. My kindest remembrance to Mme. Duverney. I hope mother and child are both well, and all your family. When you see my father and mother embrace them for me and for M. and Mme. Semejon.

"If you should chance to see the young ladies in the Rue du Bac tell them they are quite wrong if they are offended with me; I am still the same good fellow, only a little bit cracked.

"Je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur,

"Your friend

"CAMILLE COROT.

[&]quot;Monsieur Théodore Duverney, rue Neuve des Petits-Champs, at the corner of Rue Saint-Anne, Paris."

At the end of that year—1828—Corot, back in Paris, receives a

visit in his studio from his father, who announces certain matrimonial projects which he contemplates for his son. The artist declines the proposal, urging pecuniary and other reasons, and finally adds: "I was not alone here in my studio when you came in. In the next room there is a woman who enters and who leaves at my pleasure. Her name is La Folie; she is my Muse and she comes to enchant me; and when the cup is full I say to her: Vanish, invisible sunbeam!" So henceforth Corot lives in freedom, an inveterate seeker whom any sudden idea starts off, either to explore the fields and the woods, or to go o' nights round the theatres and balls, to take notes and silhouettes of actresses and M. Charles Blanc tells us that for fifteen years Corot was "seeking style by means of drawing, by large lines resolutely traced, by studied sobriety in detail." The truth is he was "seeking" all his life, and his talents were constantly in course of transformation. Moreover, Corot did not deny himself his amusements. He put into practice the precept which Leonardo da Vinci formulated in his writings: "Do not imitate those who fatigue themselves by excessive labour, and who in their walks and in company go about with a look of care and a morose expression." Corot formed one of a group of six artists—three painters, himself, Jules Boilly, and Guindrant, and three architects, Hubert, Poirot and Grizard—who met from time to time in town or in the country. Boilly and Guindrant took it into their heads to decorate the walls of a village inn with a fresco representing the six friends, arrayed as academicians, crossing the Pont des Arts on their way to the Institut. This fresco has been destroyed, which is a great pity, for the faces were moulded in plaster the better to get the likeness.

From 1827 to 1831 there were no exhibitions in the Salons of the Louvre, and Corot during this time was on his travels. First he went to Volterra, in Tuscany, where he made several studies for his Agar au Désert. He tells how he found there a landscape formed of bare, ravined soil, also a type for a weeping mother. "Unfortunately," he adds, "when I took this model for my picture I was never able to recover my inspiration, and I spoiled everything I did." In 1830 he explored the departments of the Pas-de-Calais and the Nord, and brought back numerous sketches of Saint-Omer, Bergnes, Dunkirk, Lille, and other places.

Returning to Paris he witnessed the outbreak of the Revolution. Bullets were whistling everywhere, barricades were up, and the streets were full of combatants while he was painting the *Pont au Change*. So he closed his colour-box, folded up his easel, and

went home; then hurried to catch the coach for Chartres, where he awaited events. There he produced many studies and sketches, broadened his style, and painted the beautiful clear view of the 'Cathédrale de Chartres.

Returning by way of Burgundy he stops at Beaune on the banks of the Bouzoise and the Aigue, goes round the old halfruined ramparts, where one may see a fresh landscape at every step-well-cultivated gardens, rocky districts, pools covered with water-plants, wild herbage, and rows of trees-all contributing to make the walk round the old Roman city one of the loveliest to be found in France. He visits the almshouses, a gothic building, the collection of paintings by primitive Flemish masters, and the art museum. In his journey from Beaune to Dijon he keeps to the vine-stocked hillside. What delights him most at Dijon is not the superb park, nor the avenue leading thereto, nor the ducal palace, nor the parliament house, nor the churches, but once more the walk, now demolished, which followed the line of ancient stone-work—a walk lined by trees of all sorts, entangled with ivy and bindweed and climbing plants innumerable, whose roots, running through the interstices of the masonry, throw off shoots right as far as the roadway.

When Corot saw Paris again Louis Philippe occupied the place of Charles X.; affairs were settling down again, and a romantic gust was stirring literature and art. In 1831 there was an exhibition at the Louvre. Corot sent four canvases: La Forêt de Fontainebleau, two Vues d'Italie, and a Couvent sur les bords de l'Adriatique. These works attracted no notice, save on the part of Jal, who paused to remark that "the colour is too uniform, the touch lacks accent, and the painting is flat and heavy."

To the Salon of 1833 Corot sent his Madeleine en prière, which won him a medal. The critics complained that this picture was cut in two by the horizon being placed too low. But perhaps it were better to accept the opinion of Philippe Burty, who sees in this picture the breaking away from historical landscape and the apogee of Corot's first manner.

Even in those days there were landscape reformers. At their head were Paul Huet, Rousseau, and Dupré. Paul Huet, inspired by Constable, supplied the impulse. Huet and Constable both had an influence over Corot. Constable, not properly appreciated in England, had won a gold medal at the Paris Salon of 1824, and had conquered the French public to such an extent that the academic critics became uneasy. They protested against the infatuation, and

asked sternly of the young painters: "What resemblance do you find between these paintings and those of Poussin, which we must always admire and take as our models? Beware of this Englishman's pictures, they will be the ruin of the School. There is no beauty therein, nor style nor tradition." To which Constable replied: "Doth" bother yourselves about doctrines and systems; go straight ahead and follow your nature."

In 1834 Corot sent to the Salon three canvases, including a Vue de la Forêt de Fontainebleau, and a Quai de Rouen; after which he organised a journey to Italy with a painter friend, M. Grandjean. Before exploring the Apennines the two travellers stayed in the French districts of the south-east. Then Corot was recalled to Paris on account of his father's illness, and there he painted the portraits of his family. He always liked to go from landscape to figure-work. An amateur expressing surprise at this Corot remarked: "I've done at least twenty figures a year, but call it ten only: you see what that means in fifty years." Most of these works are unknown to the public, including a portrait of himself painted before his first journey to Rome. He did not care to exhibit his portraits. When any one advised him to show these large figures of his he would reply: "How can you think of such a thing! I haven't been forgiven yet for my small ones!"

He completed his Agar dans le Désert from new sketches made in Tuscany, and exhibited it in the Salon of 1835, together with a Vue prise à Riva on the banks of the Lac de Garde. It was on this occasion that one of the critics, M. Charles Lenormand, wrote these singular lines: "M. Corot, tired of the struggle, has quitted our hollow paths and wooded glades; he has seen Italy once more, and found again those vast horizons above limpid distances he suggests. so well; and his talent, which had gone just a little astray, has faithfully returned to him." The writer imagines that the only landscapes are to be found beyond the Alps, and that those around us are wanting in grandeur and beauty and grace. The same critic would deny Corot that which precisely constitutes his glory: "His touch," he observes, "is heavy and dull; the suppleness, the humidity, the charm of Nature, he knows nothing of." Then comes the well-known and absurd theory of the historical landscape—the harmony between the spot and the subject.

In the Salon of 1836 there were but two of Corot's works to be seen: Diane surprise au bain and Campagne de Rome en hiver. The same year Corot did a lithograph to illustrate La Caisse d'Epargne, a vaudeville by Edouard Delalain and Saint-Yves. It represents

Mlle. Rosalie in the part of la mère Boisseau. In 1837 he showed his Saint Jérôme (which he presented in 1849 to the church at Ville d'Avray), a Soleil Couchant, and a Vue prise dans l'ile d'Ischia. In 1838 his exhibits were Le Silène and Vue prise à Volterra, and in 1839 the Site d'Italie and the Soir, which inspired Théophile Gautier with the following lines:

Mais voici que le soir du haut des monts descend; L'ombre devient plus gaie et va s'élargissant; Le ciel vert a des tons de citron et d'orange. Le couchant s'amincit et va plier sa frange La cigale se tait et l'on n'entend de bruit Que le soupir de l'eau qui se divise et fuit. Sur le monde assoupi les heures taciturnes Tordent leurs cheveux bruns, mouillés de pleurs nocturnes; A peine reste-t-il assez de jour pour voir, Corot, ton nom modeste, écrit dans un coin noir.

For fifteen years Corot's pictures were accepted at the Salon, out of charity, as it were, and stuck in the darkest corners. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "I am in the catacombs." All this distressed him, not on his own account—for he would console himself by saying, "I still have my gift!"—but rather on account of his family, who, fortunately, continued to provide him with "soup and shoe-leather."

His family indeed remained deaf to the concert of praise begin-

· His family, indeed, remained deaf to the concert of praise beginning to make itself heard. Apropos of the *Petit Berger*, painted in 1840, and preserved in the art gallery at Metz, M. Alfred Robaut

tells the following anecdote:

"Français, who frequented Corot's studio—he had been Corot's pupil for some years—took it into his head to lithograph this picture. Corot took a proof of it to his father, who was astonished to see his son's name at the bottom of a work which suddenly pleased him, and was also signed by Français. It was simply the lithograph which attracted the worthy man, for he knew the picture itself, and had found it no more attractive than any of the others. "That's good, at any rate, that!" he exclaimed, "Camille, you must invite this M. Français to dinner." On the appointed day the elder Corot seats Français beside him, and, almost before the meal has begun, remarks, "Monsieur Français, I must congratulate you on your great talent. You have done a superb work; but Camille what do you think of him? Will he ever do anything?" all the evening the conversation turned on the same subject: sarcasms at the expense of the master, whose works were treated as unsaleable daubs, compliments for the pupil, who might have thought the whole thing a bad joke had he not known these good folks' simple, cordial nature."

Can one imagine the former dressmaker of the Rue du Bac measuring her son for a flannel vest when he was nearly fifty years old, and at sight of his broad thorax, hairy chest and muscular arms, exclaiming, "To think this is a son of mine! He's commonplace enough!" Whereupon honest Corot would reply, jokingly, "On the contrary, you should congratulate yourself on having given birth to one of the three sages; for since the beginning of the world there have been Socrates, Jesus Christ, and—I." This tutelage under which Corot lived to an advanced age is perhaps one of the causes which explain the perpetual youthfulness of his mind, the constant freshness of his talent. He always had the feeling that he was still the baby, the school-boy, or the draper's assistant, in fear of family lectures and reprimands from his master.

Three of Corot's works figured in the Salon of 1840: A Soleil Couchant, the Fuite en Egypte and a Moine. The "Flight into Egypt" now belongs to the Church at Rosny, near Mantes, to which it was presented by Corot through the instrumentality of a friend of his family, Mme. Osmond. Of the "Sunset" Gustave Planche remarks that "its aspect is delicious, and it gives one the same pleasure as reading some beautiful old idyll."

I have chosen, in order to mark the several stages in the artist's career, the works he sent to the Salons, because Corot always had a marked infatuation for these exhibitions, and because the works he sent there were always chosen with care, and showed some evolution, some advance, in his manner. In 1841 the Salon saw three canvases: Un Site des environs de Naples, Démocrite et les Abdéritains, and La Fontaine. Of the five paintings submitted in 1842 the judges refused three. The two canvases accepted were a Site d'Italie, and the Verger which was commissioned by the Minister of the Interior. Corot parted with the first of these pictures to offer it to the little gallery at Sémur, in memory of a certain connection his family had with that part of Burgundy.

In this same year, 1842, Corot paid his last visit to Italy. After this date he passed his summer either in Switzerland, in Normandy, or in Brittany, whence he always returned with an ample collection of studies and sketches. While staying at Mortain he came across the son of his former master, M. Delalain, who still preserved five portraits which Corot had painted in his *employé* days—these portraits representing the whole Delalain family.

From Italy he brought back a Vue des Jardins de la Villa d'Este,

which he intended for the Louvre; but it was not accepted. He at once set about arranging his display for 1843. Of his three pictures—Jeunes Filles au Bain, Un Soir, and L'Incendie de Sodome—the jury refused one, the last-named, the subject of which he had found in Brittany. By way of compensation he received a commission for a decorative painting intended for the church of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet. It is called Le Baptême du Christ, and Delacroix criticises it in these terms:

"Corot is a real artist. One must see a painter at home to get an idea of his merits. I have seen again, and appreciated quite differently, pictures which I had seen in galleries and which there had impressed me but slightly. His large Baptôme du Christ is full of simple beauty. . . . his trees are superb. I spoke to him about the tree I have to do in Orphée (for the library of the Palais Bourbon). He told me to go a little beyond myself, and give myself up to whatever came to me. This is what he does, generally. He will not admit that one can succeed by taking infinite pains. Titian, Raphael, and Rubens, all worked easily. They only added to reality that which they knew thoroughly. . . . This facility notwithstanding, there is always the inevitable labour. Corot ponders long over an object; his ideas begin to come, and he adds to them while working; it is a good system."

It was proposed to entrust Corot with the decoration of another panel in the same church, but the painter declined on account of the administrative formalities, saying he would be glad to see this commission given to some impecunious brother painter. A newspaper of the period attributed this second picture to Corot, remarking that in the first he had shown more personality. "Really," said Corot, "it were impossible to formulate a more judicious criticism."

Corot was infinitely endowed for this mural painting, but opportunities of proving his ability were few and far between. He was obliged to take advantage of the offers made by friends who begged him to decorate their houses, at Mantes, at Rosny, and at Auvers. One day he had come from Rosny to Mantes to visit Me. Robert, a notary, and observed some workmen engaged in painting a bathroom. Sending his "confrères" away, he took possession of their paint-pots, and himself did the four panels, which have been preserved, if not respected; for the owner of the house thought fit to have added to one a little dog, and to another a white rabbit. After this Corot decorated the walls of the kiosk standing near his relations' property at Ville d'Avray, and then did the houses.





of Daubigny and Decamps, the church at Rosny, and that of Ville d'Avray. He would have liked to cover the walls of some prison with his paintings. Said he: "I would have shown these poor creatures the country in my own fashion, and I believe I would have converted them to goodness by bringing them the pure blue sky."

In 1844 Corot returned to the Salon his Incendie de Sodome, which was accepted, together with a couple of landscapes. In 1845 he sent three pictures: Homère et les Bergers, Daphnis et Chloë, and a landscape. The "Homer" is now in the gallery of Saint Lo. About this time Corot attempted etching by means of his Souvenir de Toscane, a plate signed simply with the initials "C. C." This was retouched later, and reproduced in the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" of April 1, 1875.

A solitary picture of Corot's figured in the annual exhibition of 1846, two having been rejected. This was his *Vue de la Forêt de Fontainebleau*, which earned for the artist the Cross of the Legion of Honour. This caused his father to remark: "I think we must

give Camille a little more money."

The following year he exhibited a Soir and a Berger jouant avec sa Chèvre. Gustave Planche described the Soir as "a pearl for which there would be keen competition among amateurs." Théophile Gautier, on the other hand, while admiring the work, gave the following erroneous analysis of Corot's talent: "It's a strange talent, that of M. Corot: he has the eye, without the hand; he sees like a consummate artist and paints like a child who has had a brush put between his thumb and forefinger for the first time; he hardly knows how to hold the brush and apply the colour to the canvas. Well! even this doesn't prevent M. Corot from being a great landscapist: a love of Nature, a sense of poetry and artistic intelligence make up for all this; this bungler achieves astonishing results, such as are never attained by the most consummate dexterity. This thick, heavy touch, hesitating as it seems, obtains effects impossible to the facile brush which travels faster than the brain." Thoré, in the "Constitutionnel," ranked the Soir above the Berger, but he considered its execution "embarrassed" and its colouring "dull and ill-put-on."

Although press and public alike were discussing Corot, his pictures either did not sell at all, or fetched very low prices, as is proved by the following letter addressed by the artist to a provincial collector, M. Dutilleux, of Arras, who became a friend and in a way a pupil:

c xvii

"Ville d'Avray, May 20, 1847.

SIR,

I have received your kind letter wherein you announce your intention of having something by me. I am greatly flattered by this distinction on your part, and will hasten to send you on a small canvas, according to your instructions. I should like to know whether you would prefer to have a study from Nature or a composition. The price of these would be 200 francs. The studies measure from 12 to 15 inches.

Awaiting your reply, Sir, I have the honour to be, Yours faithfully,

C. Corot fils."

It was about this sale that Corot said to one of his friends: "At last I've sold a picture, and I'm sorry for it. It will be missing from the complete collection." The artist at the age of 50 signed himself. "Corot fils" for the reason that during nearly the whole year he lived with his parents at Ville d'Avray, and because the purchaser's letter had been opened by Corot père, who thought it must have come from some artist-friend of his son's, so utterly improbable seemed the existence of a genuine amateur buyer. In this same year the old man died, never having realised the fame or the talent of his son.

· Eighteen-forty-eight was an eventful year, quite apart from the revolution of February. Corot, who hitherto had had some of pictures rejected each year, sent nine canvases this time, and all were accepted. What had happened? Simply this: the judges were elected by the artists by ballot. Corot was one of those chosen, being ninth on the list, with 353 votes out of 801. his pictures were : Site d'Italie, Intérieur de Bois, Vue de Ville d'Avray, Une Matinée, Crépuscule, Un Soir, Effet du Matin, and Un Matin. The Site d'Italie, which was purchased by the State, is in the Douai Gallery. Théophile Gautier wrote a beautiful passage in celebration of the freshness of these mists of morning, this Nature half-awake. "Landscapists," said he, "do not usually rise so early as that." Corot indeed had only to go out at dawn, from the house which his family had owned since 1817, to be present at Nature's awakening over the pool of Ville d'Avray, the woods of Garches and Marnes and Villeneuve l'Etang and Saint-Cloud. The scene is always lovely and full of life. From the other side of the water, on the edge of which stands a bust of Corot on a pedestal of stone—the work of Geoffroy Dechaume—the giant trees embrace at their tops and mix

c xviii

the colours of their leaves, the pale quivering poplar mingling with the deep green of the chestnut, ferns grow in plenty in the soil, and

all around is verdure and bloom, shadow and light.

In 1849, Corot was again one of the judges, being elected tenth by 217 votes in 646. His exhibits were: Le Christ au Jardin des Oliviers, Vue prise à Volterra, Site du Limousin, Vue prise à Ville d'Avray, and Etude du Colisée. At this period Corot's second manner may be characterised as simply naturalistic. More and more closely he succeeds, by his fluid, delicate painting, in expressing the striking appearance of things in the light. His Christ of 1849 is in the Langres Gallery.

In 1850 Corot was elected a member of the "Jury de Peinture". by 330 votes out of 615. His exhibit that year consisted of a Lever de Soleil, Etudes prises à Ville d'Avray, a Site du Tyrol Italien, and Une Matinée, with dancing nymphs rejoicing at the return of day. These nymphs were adversely criticised. The picture was evidently a reminiscence of the classical style of composition, but it also represented Corot's own fancy animating the dusk rising over the water, and lingering on the ground. The essential thing is that he depicted these forms with truest touch, in rhythmical movement, with an exact sense of values. This does not mean that he evaded reality. He did not shut his eyes to the labourer driving his plough along the fields, or to the reapers and haymakers in harvest field and meadow, or to the woodcutter trimming the coppice or cutting down the tall forest trees, or to the shepherd gathering his flock, or to the boatmen and fisher folk of the lakes and rivers.

There was no Salon in 1851. However, Corot had prepared a Danse des Nymphes, composed with the aid of studies done in Rome in 1826, a Matin, and a Ronde d'Enfants. That year, Corot, having got his mother's leave of absence—"liberté de s'envoler" he calls it—goes off to Arras to join the amateur painter, Dutilleux. Thence he goes on to La Rochelle to stay with a family at whose house Courbet is also a visitor. The two artists are but very slightly acquainted, and the Burgundian and the Franc-Comtois look curiously at one another. Corot is the sturdy fellow who once in the South got rid of a troublesome peasant by knocking him down with a blow of the fist. Courbet is garrulous and boastful, and, like many of his countrymen, as simple as conceited. The two men discuss things, and then each goes off to paint in his own way. In this same year Corot makes a trip to England. At the Duke of Westminster's gallery he takes a few notes which have been found in a pocket-book: "2 Claude Lorrains (2 Soirs); I Raphael, big picture (Virgin, Child Jesus and St. John the Baptist—admirable); I Rembrandt, landscape; I Salvator (10 to 12 feet); I Hobbema, very fine." It is said that after this visit he resolved to lower his horizons.

In 1852 the management of the Salon was altered. The jury consisted of fifteen members nominated by the Administration des Beaux-Arts, and five elected members. Corot was elected as supplementary judge by 59 votes out of 330. He displayed Repos, a Soleil Couchant, and a Vue du Port de la Rochelle, and the following year Une Matinée, a Coucher de Soleil, and a Saint Sébastien, which Delacroix declared was

perhaps the most religious picture of the century.

Corot, although reluctant to leave his widowed mother, neverthe-less travelled a good deal about this time in the Nord, in Brittany, and in Normandy. In 1854, there being no exhibition, he accompanied Dutilleux as far as Rotterdam. In 1855 the annual Salon was merged in the Universal Exhibition. Corot figured among the thirty-four judges appointed by Napoleon III. He sent six canvases: Effet de Neige, Souvenir de Marconsey, Printemps, Soir, Souvenir d'Italie, and Une Soirée. In the same year he worked at his Chemin de Croix for the church at Rosny; also he did a picture, composed from views of Riva, for the Marseilles gallery, and then went off on his travels until the end of October. On his return he wrote to Dutilleux:

"... Here I am back in the studio, after going through Normandy and Brittany, and doing a bit of the Lake of Geneva, La Sologne and Ville d'Avray—as much as I possibly could. I have a lot to do, and so many old pictures to finish in order to get them out of the way, as the studio is rather too crowded! Another twenty studies this year; five or six of them are good, so I must be content with that. If I take that little trip, we'll talk about the Exhibition; every one seems fairly well satisfied with mine."

The manner in which Corot took note of values in his sketches may be mentioned here. If he observed a bit of colour composed of four different tonalities, he would give each a number, varying from 1 to 4. This numbering enabled him to note his effects very rapidly while going through a landscape, either in a carriage or a railway train—a mnemonic system of fixing the fugitive impression of anything seen or remembered. Herein lies the delicious charm of Corot's painting. In 1857 the Académie des Beaux-Arts, constituted into a jury,

In 1857 the Académie des Beaux-Arts, constituted into a jury, decided the fate of the works sent to the Salon. Corot exhibited his Incendie de Sodome, a Nymphe jouant avec l'Amour, a Concert, a Soleil Couchant, a Soir, a Souvenir de Ville d'Avray, and a Matinée. The "Burning of Sodom" was the picture which figured in the Salon of 1844—Corot had simply reduced its dimensions by taking fifty centi-

metres off its height. In this same year Castagnary, just starting as art critic on the Siècle, makes the queer remark that "he has always had for Corot a mixture of love and kindly pity." Proceeding, he says, no less strangely, "I don't know where this excellent man, whose manner is so gently moving, goes to paint his landscapes; I have never seen them anywhere. But such as they are they have infinite charm." The Concert was ridiculed, not on account of the work itself, but for the choice of the subject. Nevertheless, Corot's idea was quite simple and quite admissible. He wanted to unite and to symbolise two things which he loved beyond all else: the country and music. He had a nice voice, and would sometimes sing at parties, on condition that there were not more than fifteen people present. used to go to the Opera, and to the Symphonic Concerts. On the other hand, he read very little. Sometimes he would buy books at random on the quays, but simply in order to amuse his models. day in his studio his friends found a woman, resting after her pose, reading a Latin work by Cujas. As for Corot himself, reading "Polyeucte" was enough for him. He saturated his mind with Corneille's tragedy, without ever getting to the end; for, twenty years after beginning it, he remarked one day: "This year I really must finish 'Polyeucte.'" He never read the newspapers, and knew nothing that was going on. On the 23rd of February, 1848, to a visitor who was talking to him of Louis Philippe and Guizot, he innocently remarked, "Certainly people seem to be dissatisfied." Notwithstanding this, only a few days later he left his mother and went from Ville d'Avray to Paris, to get his equipment as a Garde National. wanted to be near the danger." With the same prudent reserve he once remarked, "M. Victor Hugo seems to be pretty famous in literature." This excellent man, of whom the crowd knew nought, and whose genius was recognised only by a few artists and persons of delicate taste, was quite ignorant about his contemporaries, with the exception of the painters, and most of these he regarded as his superiors. Of Delacroix he said one day, "He is an eagle and I am only a lark, . singing little songs in my grey clouds."

Corot spent a part of the year 1857 at Ville d'Avray, paid several brief visits to Brittany, when he went to see Camille Bernier; he was also in Switzerland and at Dunkirk. There was no Salon in 1858, but an auctioneer, M. Boussalon, suggested a sale, in order to feel the pulse of the public. Corot hesitated long. Certainly he could not sell his pictures; on the contrary, he was more accustomed to buying them back. More than once he regained possession—for a consideration—of pictures he had "lent" to pupils or to fellow-artists. To try a

c xxi

public auction seemed to him to be very risky. Still he had in reserve such a stock of works that perhaps he might part with some of them. Only a short time before a visitor had asked him, "Have you insured your studio against fire? If there were to be one here you would lose at least forty thousand francs worth of paintings. I once had a friend whose gallery was destroyed, and the indemnity he received consoled him for the loss of his pictures." "He hadn't done them," interrupted Corot, excitedly; "if such a misfortune befel me, it would kill me." Eventually Corot entrusted thirty-eight pictures to the ministerial official; among them were five large canvases. The sale realised 14,233 francs—about £570. The auctioneer was ashamed of such a sum—Corot, on the other hand, thought it so high he could hardly believe it.

The same year, urged by one of his intimate friends, M. J. Michelin, and assisted by the advice of Bracquemond, Corot resumed his etching work. He etched the *Bateau sous les Saules*, the subject of which

was taken from one of the lakes at Ville d'Avray.

In the Salon of 1859 Corot exhibited Dante et Virgile (in which the animals were drawn by Barye), Macbeth, Idylle, Paysage avec Figures, Souvenir du Limousin, Tyrol Italien, and Etude à Ville d'Avray. Castagnary, when he admires Corot, seems to do so regretfully, and the conclusion he arrives at is pitiless. "No truth in his invention, no variety in his tones and in his lines: his composition is uniform, his colour impossible, his drawing false and perpetually slack." Despite these condemnations Corot does not lose faith in his work, nor his fondness for truth. In the month of August we find him at Montlhéry, whence he writes to one of his pupils, named Auguin, living at Bordeaux: "I am just back from a long visit to Normandy, and I am off again to Switzerland with several friends. I recommend to you the greatest possible simplicity in your work; above all, do just as you see. Have confidence in yourself, and take for your motto, 'Conscience et confiance.' 'Je vous embrasse bien. working away like a big ruffian."

No Salon in 1860, but in the following year Corot displays six works: Le Repos, Souvenir d'Italie, Le Lac, Orphée, Soleil Levant, Danse de Nymphes. "Orpheus" was inspired by a revival of Gluck's opera, and the goddess in the picture is Madame Viardot. In this case Castagnary admires the landscape, "so suave in its expression that the tongue of Virgil alone, in its pure and tender tones, could echo and express it." Théophile Gautier, on the other hand, is dissatisfied. Orphée is not particularly to his liking. "This strange unbroken silhouette of a Eurydice, stiff as a doll, would provoke one to

laughter, if it were possible to laugh at our excellent Corot, so devoted to his art, so hardworking and deeply convinced. Happily he is entirely himself in his Soleil Levant, in his Souvenir d'Italie, and in his Lac, with its silvered atmosphere, its luminous vapour, its placid waters, its bright trees and its Elysian aspect." In the same year Corot etched the Etang de Ville d'Avray, which exists in three states. One of them illustrated Edmond Roche's "Poésies Posthumes," dedicated to Corot.

Again there was no Salon in 1862, but in 1863 Corot was represented by a Soleil Levant, an Etude à Ville d'Avray, and an Etude à Méry-sur-Oise. In 1864 he showed Le Coup de Vent and the Souvenir de Mortefontaine, which was purchased for the Tuileries; in 1865 the Matin or the Bacchante aux Amours, and two Souvenirs d'Italie, one of which, done in the neighbourhood of Lake Nemi, was to figure in the Exhibition of 1867. M. Henri Dumesnil affirms that this masterpiece in its first state was a motif of Ville d'Avray. In the same Salon was seen an etching with the same title, Souvenir d'Italie. There was some talk that year of awarding to Corot the médaille d'honneur, but his chance was spoilt because he was not a historical This disappointment was soon forgotten; but Corot was greatly grieved at the death of his friend, Dutilleux, his first purchaser and also his pupil, to attend whose funeral he went to Arras. Corot exhibited two canvases in 1866: Le Soir, or Fête Antique, and Solitude (Limousin), also an etching, Environs de Rome. In that year Corot was attacked by gout, a disease very prevalent in Burgundy, whence his family came. M. Henri Dumesnil tells us that Corot's grandfather was the son of an agriculturist of Mussy-la-Fosse, a village near Semur, in the Côte d'Or. In 1860 Corot went to visit some distant relatives there whom he had traced, and remarked in this connection: "The country is full of honest workers bearing the same name as myself. In the fields they are always calling to one another, 'Hé! Corot!' You hear nothing else. I always thought some one was wanting me, and I felt there quite as though I were among my own people."

To the Salon of 1867 he sent Coup de Vent and a Vue de Marisselle, and to the Universal Exhibition Saint-Sébastien, La Toilette, Macbeth, Souvenir du Lac de Nemi, a Matin, a Soir, and the Ruines du Château de Pierrefonds; as in 1855, he won the second medal, and also received the Croix d'officier of the Legion of Honour; and the honest fellow in his happiness exclaims, "I must try to turn out good pictures, to show I haven't stolen it."

From this moment Corot became really popular. The dealers' c xxiii

windows were full of his canvases, on which large profits were made, the more so as the artist was never very particular about his prices. He good-naturedly fell in with other people's fancies of all sorts—decorating screens, plates, box-lids, terra-cotta work, brooches, and even, it is said, the inside of a hat. At the exhibition of Industrial Arts he had two painted silk screens, done for M. Duvelleroy, who displayed them again in 1858.

In 1868 Corot sent to the Salon a Soir and a Matin à Ville d'Avray. Castagnary now surrenders. This Soir he describes as "one of Corot's blondest and most harmonious works. From it there springs a poetry so penetrating, so victorious, that all one's theories in favour of precise workmanship strive against it in vain." The same year he produced an etching, Dans les Dunes, a souvenir of the woods of La Haye, which was reproduced in André Lemoyne's "Sonnets et Eaux-fortes."

Two canvases were seen in 1870: Paysage avec Figures and Ville d'Avray. As was his yearly custom, Corot went off to Ville d'Avray in the spring. "I go there," said he, "to rest myself with work. Think of it! I can't have more than thirty years to live, and they go so fast! Already seventy-four have flown, and to me they seem to have been as fast as the journeys of one's dreams . . . "

Then came the declaration of war. Corot refused to leave Paris; · indeed he wanted to go on the ramparts, and went so far as to buy . several rifles. But physical weakness deterred him. So he worked away, and turned everything into money wherewith to relieve the horrors of the siege. He went among the ambulances and hospitals, emptying his hands and his pockets. He gave a big sum for "the manufacture of the cannon required to drive the Prussians out of the woods of Ville d'Avray." Then later he sent ten thousand francs for the liberation of the country—a gift which he afterwards gave to the poor of the tenth arrondissement. Instances of his kindness, his generosity are plenty. He bought the little house in which Daumier lived at Valmondois, in order to make a present of it to the artist, now nearly blind, and on the point of being turned out. Daumier in reply told Corot he was "the only man he esteemed so much that he could accept anything from him without blushing." One morning an artist friend came to borrow five thousand francs. Corot was ill that day, and in a bad temper. He said he hadn't the money. Then, tormented at having refused his friend, he thought better of it, and having dressed, hurried off to the borrower, exclaiming "Forgive me, I'm nothing better than a canaille—I told you just now I hadn't got five thousand francs. That was a lie: here they are." An Italian





model came to him one day with two daubs which he was trying to sell, in order to get his sick wife back to her native land—"How much do you want?" asked Corot. "A thousand francs." Corot gave the money, and with his brush transformed the two "infamies doublées d'horreur," and presented them to the Italian. A few months before his death he sold some of his pictures, and on being paid for them, handed to the dealer a bundle of ten thousand-franc notes: "Keep them," he said, "and when I am gone I want you to give an annuity of a thousand francs for ten years to the widow of my friend Millet." In selling his pictures Corot had a system of which certain unscrupulous people took advantage. His custom was to let the less prosperous dealers have his canvases at a low price, to require more from buyers of the middle class, and, as he put it, to "saler" the rich—that is, to make them "pay through the nose." Now some of these latter did not scruple to employ agents in order to obtain better terms.

When the siege was raised Corot yielded to the entreaties of M. Alfred Robaut, and went to Arras and Douai. He painted the Beffroi de Douai, wherein he figures, standing in the street, dressed in his long blouse. Meantime the Commune had been proclaimed in Paris, and M. Robaut relates that he often had great trouble in checking Corot's ardour, "for every moment he wanted to return to Paris, to share the troubles of his family and his friends, or at least to vote." It was not till the end of May that Corot was seen in Paris, only to start off at once for the North, whence he returned with four pictures: the Moulin, the Canal de la Sensee, the Route d'Arleux, and the Chaumière. This same year he engraved several eaux-fortes: Vénus coupe les Ailes de l'Amour (in two states, unfinished plates), Souvenir des Fortifications de Douai, and the Dôme florentin—unsigned and unpublished plates. Another etching, Les Baigneuses, was spoilt through an accident. The unbitten plate was sent to be printed, and the workman took off the coating of varnish, the result being that the proof simply showed the strokes marked by the point on the metal.

Back in Paris in July, Corot reassures Mme. Dutilleux (his friend's widow) as to the state of his health, by means of the following letter, which is sufficiently curious to be reproduced in the exact form in which it was written:

"Ville d'Avray, ce 3 Août 1871.

MADAME ET AMIE,

Je sors mes lunettes avec rapidité pour vous écrire que nous sommes installés, ma sœur et moi: la maison est nettoyée et les traces

C XXV

prussiennes ont disparu. Ma sœur est en assez bonne santé, elle m'a chargé de vous faire ses compliments ainsi qu'à toute la famille. J'ai commencé des études à Ville d'Avray, j'ai retrouvé des motifs, mais ce ne sont pas les jolis marais d'Arleux, Paluel, &c. Je pense que vous passez de jolis moments dans ces jolis bateaux et jolis bois du pont de Paluel et les jolis bois d'Oisy. Je me suis bien amusé là-bas et je pense que vous en faites encore tout autant, pour ne pas en perdre l'habitude et que Mme. Marie aura retrouvé du calme, du repos et alors la santé. Je fais des prières pour que tout ça se réalise,

Pêchez aussi de belles anguilles
Sauce Moutarde,
Et au premier repas, je vous prie,
Buvez à la santé du pauvre petit nègre,
Votre nourrisson
Pendant la Commune.
J'ai l'air d'écrire en vers.

Embrassez bien pour moi M. et Mme. Alfred, Mme. Marie et Léontine. Mes amitiés à Charles, à M. et Mme. Seiter, à Paul et sa famille, et à M. Pochez, quand vous les verrez.

Recevez, madame et amie, l'assurance de mon amitié. C. COROT.

Nouveaux remerciements pour tous vos soins.

PS.—Les études que j'ai rapportées ont été goûtées et prises presque toutes."

This was not the first time Corot had "seemed to be writing poetry." I have now before me the reproduction of an autograph, accompanied by the following:

Reflexions sur la Peinture les deux premières choses à étudier—c'est la forme puis les valeurs

ces deux choses sont pour moi les points d'appui et sérieuses dans l'art

la couleur et l'exécution mettront le charme dans l'œuvre.*

c xxvi

^{*} Reflections on painting. The two principal things to study are form and then values. These two things are my supports and are important in art. Colour and execution will put charm into one's work.

The two canvases which figured in the Salon of 1872 were a Souvenur de Ville d'Avray and Près d'Arras. At Arras on the 11th of July, 1872, was celebrated Corot's artistic jubilee. In the same year he went to Rouen, where he saw the paintings by Delacroix in the Palais de Justice; then down south, on the Spanish frontier, "where," he remarks, "I saw some extraordinary greens. Only wait till I can take it all in; vous m'en direz des nouvelles!" At Rouen he showed his travelling companions the place in the courtyard of the lycée where he used to be put "on picket." "At that time," said he, "I could hide better than now, for there was no corporation to be seen." On the black-board in one of the rooms he drew a little flower and signed it oc, in imitation of the traditional x. This same year he paid other visits, a score or so at least, for he had friends everywhere who invited him to their homes that they might celebrate his jubilee. In 1873 he exhibited a Pastorale and Le Passeur, and in 1874 three works: Souvenir d'Arleux, Le Soir and Clair de Lune. This year, as in. the preceding one, the question of awarding Corot the "médaille " d'honneur" was discussed; but it was given to M. Gérôme. old man was deeply hurt at this. His friends and admirers protested, and got up a subscription to present him with a testimonial. Geoffroy Dechaume did a gold medallion nine centimetres in diameter, and this was presented to Corot at a banquet given in his honour at the Grand Hôtel on the 29th of December, 1874. M. Marcotte simply said: "There is too much for one to say, both of the man' and of the artist. This medal will speak for us." Corot opened the case and read

À COROT, ses confrères et ses admirateurs Juin 1874

"It makes one very happy," he replied, "to feel one is loved like that." Behind a mask of cheerfulness the old man but ill-concealed a great weariness. He was pronounced to be suffering from cancer of the stomach. He did not take to his bed at once, but prepared his pictures for the next year's Salon, and went to pay a last visit to the cottage at Ville d'Avray. A few days before his death he told one of his friends how in a dream he had seen "a landscape with a sky all roses, and clouds all roses too. It was delicious," he said; "I can remember it quite well. It will be an admirable thing to paint." The morning of the day he died, the 22nd of February, 1875, he said to the woman servant who brought him some nourishment, "Le père Corot is lunching up there to-day." He died at half-past eleven at night.

His funeral took place two days later at Père-la-Chaise. M. de Chennevières, Director of Fine Arts, waxed eloquent. A priest thought it his duty to declare that Corot had made his confession. M. Jules Dupré said, "It will be hard to replace the artist; the man can never be replaced."

His three canvases—Les Bûcherons, Plaisirs du Soir and Biblis—appeared in the Salon of 1875, hung with black crêpe. Castagnary wrote: "There is nothing new in the Bûcherons or in the Plaisirs du Soir, but it is evident that despite his age the artist preserved his steady hand and his clear keen eye. These canvases are worthy to rank among the finest of their predecessors; they show the master-hand in all its completeness. His fancy was as fresh, his sensibility as keen, as ever. Death might have had pity and paused before cutting short so sweet a life-work."

This same year—1875—an Exhibition comprising 228 of his pictures was arranged at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, and collections were displayed at the Universal Exhibitions of 1878, 1889 and 1900, and at the Musée Galliera in 1895.

The posthumous sale took place at the Hôtel Drouot in May and June, 1875, and produced nearly two million francs, or £80,000. The

catalogue contained 600 numbers.

Corot's life was entirely devoted to reverie and to labour. The man appears to us delightfully simple and honest; he was candour itself, kindness itself. The artist is very great. To reveal him as he really is a complete exhibition of his work would be needed; but think how his pictures are scattered! Nevertheless one hopes this idea may be realised one of these days; with all our means of transport and our facilities for international communication. Surely England and America will consent to let Europe see, for a month or two, the masterpieces they have captured from us! The realisation of such a result would be well worth the cost of an embassy. Then one would be able to see those lovely, but so little known figures which are Corot's absolute masterpieces, revealing as they do an altogether particular sense of the supple grace of the human form and the serious beauty of the face.

Before I close let me say I have no desire to dispute the undoubted fact that Corot had a "manner." I can see clearly enough that for a long time there remained within him something of the "historical land-scape," and that in many of his pictures with small figures, these figures are Italian in bearing and in style. Observe the three women in the *Toilette*—to take a single example. It is evident that the artist was at the same time timid and obstinate; indeed, by systematically

c xxviii

selecting a number of his works, one might convict him of monotony. Also it is evident to me that in many of his landscapes he has of set purpose put in a foreground of black trees which add a mystery to the distant dawning light. I recognise too that he rarely attempted to penetrate the infinite colouring of the shade, and that on this point he accepted—he whose discernment was so fine—the ordinary views of his time.

But how he emancipated himself from the historical landscape in his studies from Nature of figures and landscapes! How all criticism must needs cease before those canvases in which he was really himself; before those wherein the poetical inspiration within them shone forth with so soft a splendour!

I gaze on these meadows, these woods, these waters, these skies all the delightful haunts in which Corot spent his life, and which he offers to all who, like himself, desire to know and love the eternal beauty of things—and as I gaze I can imagine the emotion which animated him, because this little piece of painted canvas preserves the thrill of that moment when the painter was moved and dazzled; because leaves, water, grass and cloud all are still aquiver from the touch of this artist hand—like the reflection of the light which must have shone in his thoughtful eyes. He had no "manner" in these moments of joy and plenitude. He was no longer cautious, diligent. himself go; yet all the time he was in full possession of his technical skill and knowledge, which was great, despite the reservations and criticisms of the writers I have quoted. His knowledge was within him, and, so to speak, in spite of himself, did service to his exuberance. Then, I think, he must have laughed aloud, and sung all his songs, and talked slyly to himself in the fields, like some big happy child. You may give yourself up to him when he feels this joy, this beatitude, this enthusiasm. He will open to your gaze the vast fields or He will teach you how much concentrated light in the world. beauty exists wherever you are. His exquisite local genius has plumbed the depths of all things around him.

He is the subtle, the delicious painter of the land in which we live. From the pools of Ville d'Avray to the fields and coppices of Artois he roams from morn till night amid the fair and delicate landscapes of Northern France. He knows every path, every byway, every road. He wanders round the hill-sides, through the forests to the open glades. Wherever there be a spring, lighting up brown earth and sombre green with its crystals, there he will stand and watch the reflection of the heavens. He spends his morning hours gazing on the mists as they unfold their veils above the familiar pool and beyond the narrow

c xxix

stream. He notes the delicate pattern of the hoar-frost. He is enraptured with the last rays of sunlight lingering on the water. And then he flies away right into the clouds, like the lark to which he compared himself; and then his delight at their limpidity and their depth is truly extraordinary. Nearly all the skies he painted have lightness and vast extent; like air itself they are formed of some impalpable matter.

Look closely into these sun harmonies and here and there you will discover the prescience of a fine and subtle analysis of light. Historically, Corot's work, which belongs to the painting of the Past, heralds, by its *nuances* and by all the hidden treasures it suggests, the bold experiments and happy discoveries of the Future.

GUSTAVE GEFFROY.

Here are the prices obtained by some of Corot's works at public sales: February, 1881: Jeune Baigneuse, 5000 francs; Eurydice, 6510 francs; L'Atelier, 5400 francs; Le Canal (environs de Rouen), 5900 francs; La Prairie (environs de Saintes), 5900 francs; Le Tréport, 5610 francs; Effet du Soir au Bord de la Rivière, 4900 francs; Environs de Ville d'Avray, 1700 francs. November, 1881: Baigneuses sous Bois, 12,500 francs; Christine Nilsson, represented as a gipsy, at the outset of her career, playing the mandoline in the streets, 4000 francs. February, 1882: Le Matin, 6000 francs; Le Sentier, 5700 francs; Les Laveuses, 1750 francs; Soleil couchant, 850 francs; Paysage, 805 francs; Bûcherons sous Bois, 250 francs; a drawing, 160 francs; La Musique, 530 francs; La Lecture, 1250 francs; Réverie, 2450 francs. May, 1882: Paysage (first manner), 1220 francs; Danse des Nymphes, 2350 francs; Le Passeur, 7650 francs; Pêcheur Napolitain, 5000 francs.

March, 1883: La Mare, 2650 francs. April, 1883: Vue prise à Ville d'Avray, 14,100 francs; La Femme à la Toque, 7100 francs; Le Matin, 2800 francs; Le Pont, 2050 francs; L'Atelier, 1200 francs; L'Atelier (pendant of the last-named), 4600 francs; La Haie, 4000 francs; Portrait de la Cathédrale de Chartres, 1200 francs; Le Moulin, 1750 francs; La Prairie (Saint-Cloud), 3150 francs; Le Château de Chillon, 1510 francs; Le Pont, 1620 francs; Sous Bois (1849), 1900 francs.

In May of the same year a landscape belonging to Arsène Houssaye, and attributed to Corot, was put up for sale and realised 6300 francs. In December, 1883, Deux Femmes et un Enfant brought 9000 francs. It was at this time that the "Dumas-Trouillebert incident" occurred. The matter was settled rather more than a year later (in January,

1885) by a judgment of the Court ordering M. Tedesco "to let Trouillebert put his own signature on the picture called *La Fontaine des Gabourets*," which, bearing the signature of Corot, had been sold to M. Alexandre Dumas.

In March, 1884, a picture twice signed by Corot was sold for 22,000 francs, while another canvas, which, although signed, was disputed, "went" for 25 francs. This was the Liseuse. The same year I find the following prices: Les Saules, 7800 francs; the Nymphe de Champs, 8005 francs. In 1885, Chloë was sold for 9900 francs. There was a sale of pictures, including many Corots, at New York in 1886. Here are some of the prices, in dollars: A Paysage, 5000; a Soir sur la Rivière, 9000; Paysage et Animaux, 4050. The Corcoran Gallery at Washington secured the Ramasseurs de Bois for 15,000 dollars.

These New York prices influenced the Paris market, and a rise took place. At the end of March, 1886, a Paysage brought 13,500 francs; in May the Baigneuses, 9000 francs; a Souvenir d'Italie, 8000 francs; Le Passeur (perhaps the same as was sold in 1882), 25,100 francs; Le Pécheur, 3050 francs; the Pont de Mantes, 13,000 francs; Nymphes et Faunes (Salon of 1869), 65,100 francs; the Saules, 8300 francs; Village de Marcoussis, 8100 francs; Danse de Nymphes, 15,500 francs; and Château de Pierrefonds, 10,000 francs. On the 5th of June, 1886, Orphée ramenant Eurydice was knocked down for 25,000 francs. Prices seem to have declined in 1887. In February Le Matin "went" for 1000 francs; in May the Lisière du Bois de Ville d'Avray for 4600 francs; Vue du Pont et du Château de Saint-Ange for 9050 francs, and an Esquisse for 1225 francs. In Paris the Coup de Vent produced 5100 francs.

In March, 1888, a study called *Petit Italien assis* realised 350 francs; Diane et Nymphe au Bain surprises par Actéon (Rome, 1836), 20,000

francs; Martyre de Saint-Sébastien, 15,000 francs.

In May, 1888, Vue de Dunkerque produced 5100 francs; Château de Fontainebleau, 6000 francs; La Place du Village, 9550 francs; La Femme au Puits, 4050 francs; Les Bords de la Vienne, 7300 francs; Environs de Limoges, 2050 francs.

The sale of Corot's canvases seems to have had a check in 1889, but this was succeeded by a fresh rise in the following year. Here, for instance, are some prices obtained in 1890:—June: La Femme du Pêcheur, 13,000 francs; La Rochelle, 12,000 francs; Le Cabaret, 15,700 francs; Dunkerque, 6000 francs; Le Pont Saint-Ange (Rome), 21,000 francs; Gênes, 7100 francs; Saintry, 12,000 francs; Lac de Genève, 10,000 francs; Port de Bordeaux, 10,000 francs; the Grand

Canal (Venice), 10,200 francs; L'Entrée du Village, 16,500 francs; Marini, 20,000 francs; Le Matin, 60,000 francs; Le Soir, 63,000 francs. These prices may now be compared with some realised at certain sales ten years later: March, 1900: Le Faucheur, 6,100 francs; the Chaumières, 8400 francs; Coucher de Soleil sur l'Etang, 7500 francs; Le Village, 15,000 francs; La Rafale, 22,500 francs; Mont-de-Marsan, 11,800 francs. April, 1900: Le Chemin du Village, 250 dollars (in New York); Bords de la Rivière, 1020 francs; Les Dunes, 450 francs; Les Collines autour du Lac, 900 francs; Paysage d'Italie, 5250 francs; La Vallée après l'Orage, 1020 francs. May, 1900: Scène Antique, 1150 francs; La Lisière du Bois, 4050 francs; Pré au Bord de l'Etang, 16,000 francs; Vue de Ville d'Avray, 3000 francs; L'Etang, 24,100 francs. June, 1900: La Mare, 22,300 francs; Le Vallon de la Forêt, 11,500 francs; Le Matin, 32,600 francs; Le Soir, 34,000 francs; Le Pécheur, 44,500 francs; Italienne, 13,000 francs (this picture was sold for 20,100 francs in 1899); L'Etang de Ville d'Avray, 12,100 francs; Le Clocher, 8,100 francs; Une Muse, 14,000 francs: La Liseuse, 4000 francs; La Barrière, 8300 francs; Sentier le Long Dubois, 4100 francs; La Banlieue, 1720 francs. December, 1900: Le Coup de Vent, 12,000 francs; La Charrette, 12,000 francs. At the end of 1900 the Metropolitan Museum of New York was bequeathed a collection of pictures by Mr. Dunn. These included a landscape by Corot, for which the testator had paid 125,000 francs. During the year several Corots had been sold in London, including Bord de Rivière, £700; Le Matin, £330; and Vue de la Ville de Nantes, £380. In February, 1901, Dernier Rayon realised 10,000 francs; La Tour, 17,200 francs; and L'Arbre Coupé (a drawing), 3000 francs. Prices in April, 1901: Le Chêne, 4000 francs; Le Cavalier, 17,000 francs; in May: La Gondole, 7900 francs; La Colline, 6900 francs. The collection of M. G. de Hêle, of Brussels, contained several works by Corot, which were put up to auction on May 10, 1901, and realised the following prices: Au Bord de l'Etang, 25,100 francs; Pâturage, 18,100 francs; Le Pêcheur, 12,100 francs; Le Saule, 14,500 Other recent prices were (Paris, May, 1901): Le Matin, 2200 francs; Le Soir, 1900 francs; Paysage à Ville d'Avray, 4200 francs. November, 1901: Les Bouleaux, 3700 francs; Vue de Naples, 1200 francs; La Cour de la Ferme, 23,000 francs; Entrée d'Abbeville, 17,500 francs. December, 1901: Les Bergers, 43,800 francs; La Cour de la Ferme, 23,000 francs; Entrée d'Abbeville, 17,500 francs. At the sale of the Antonin Vallon Studio in May, 1901, a Paysage

produced 980 francs; Chemin d'Auvers, 4600 francs, and Figure de

c xxxii

jeune Femme, 7400 francs.







OIL PAINTING "MUSIC AND ART"



OIL-PAINTING
"THE WOUNDED EURYDICE"
c 2



OIL-PAINTING "MOTHER AND CHILD"



"THE BATHER" C 4

(Collection of James Arthur, Esq.)



"COTTAGE INTERIOR—LIMOUSIN" C 5

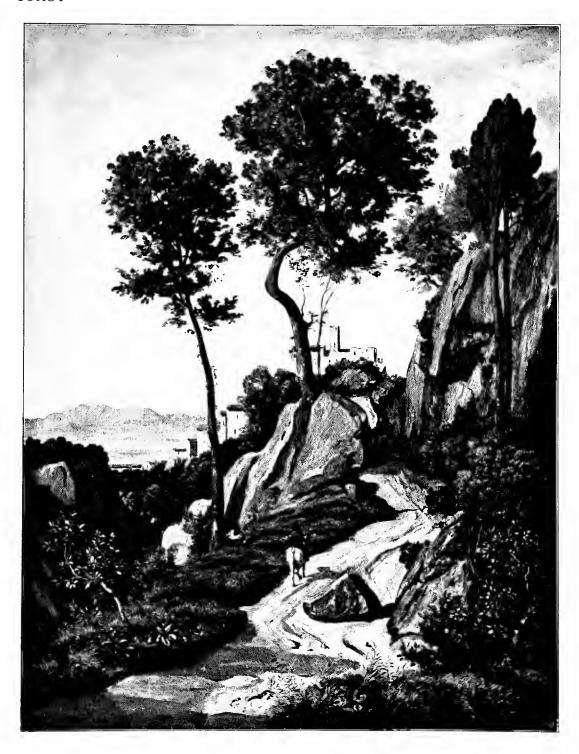
(Collection of M. Moreau-Nelaton, Paris; Photograph by Durand-Ruel, Paris and New York)

OIL-PAINTING "TIVOLI SEEN FROM THE VILLA D'ESTE"



OIL-PAINTING "HAGAR IN THE WILDERNESS"

COROT



OIL-PAINTING, 1838 "ITALIAN LANDSCAPE"



(Collection of H. S. Henry, Esg., Philadelphia, U.S.A., Photograph by Durand-Ruel, Paris and New York)



(Durand-Ruel, Paris and New York)

"NEAR ARRAS"



(Collection of Baron Denys Cochin, Paris; Photograph by Durand-Rue', Paris and New York)

"VIEW OF ROME"





(Collection of M. Durand-Ruel, Paris)

"A GUST OF WIND" c 13



(Collection of Alexander Young, Esq.)

"EVENING GLOW"



OIL-PAINTING "ORPHEUS" c 15





OIL-PAINTING "THE CANAL AT ST. QUENTIN" c 17

(Collection of Isaac Cook; Esq., St. Louis, U.S.A.: Photograph by Durand-Ruel, Paris and New York)



"THE BRIDGE." FROM F. KROSTEWITZ'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE

"SOUVENIR D'ITALIE." FROM F. KROSTEWITZ'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE







OIL PAINTING "PEASANTS NEAR A LAKE"



(Autotype Company, New Oxford Street, London. Original in the Louvre)



(Collection of Alexander Young, Esq.)





OIL PAINTING
"WOMEN BATHING"
c 25

COROT

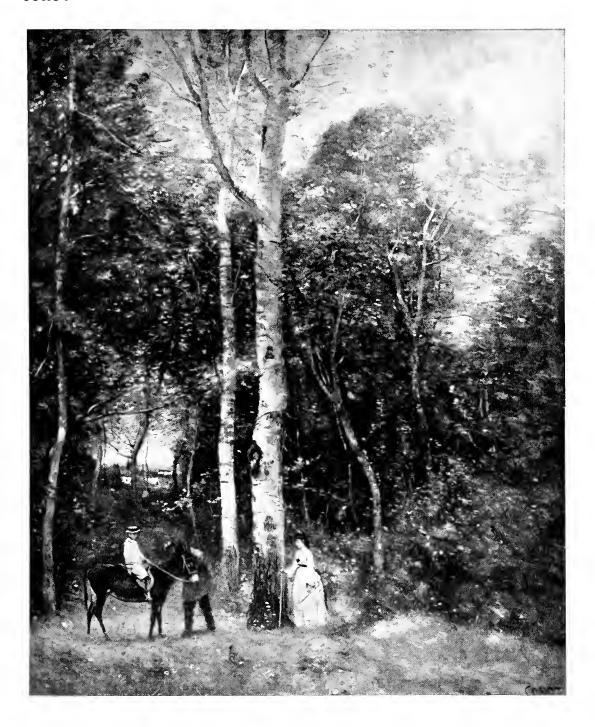




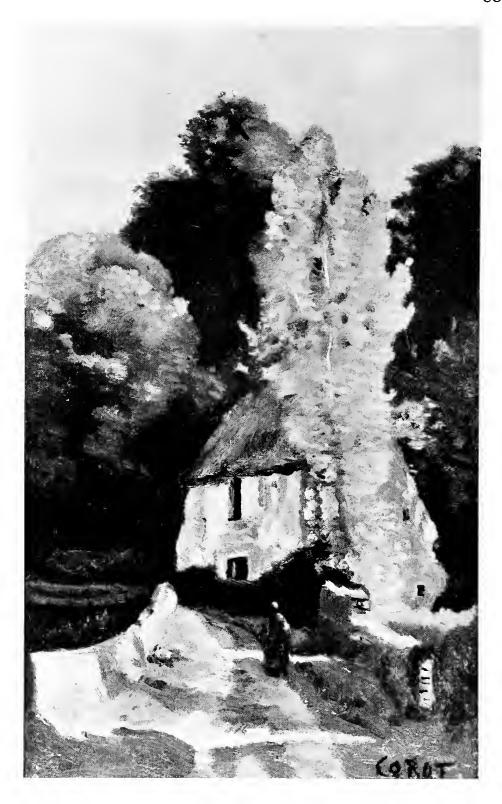
DECORATIVE PAINTING "DON QUIXOTE AND CARDENIO"







OIL PAINTING "LE PARC-DES-LIONS À MONT-MARLY"



OIL SKETCH "OLD COTTAGE NEAR SEMEUR"



(Braun, Clément, Paris)



OIL PAINTING "THE CASTLE OF WAGNOUVILLE"



(Collection of IV, A. Coats, Esq.)



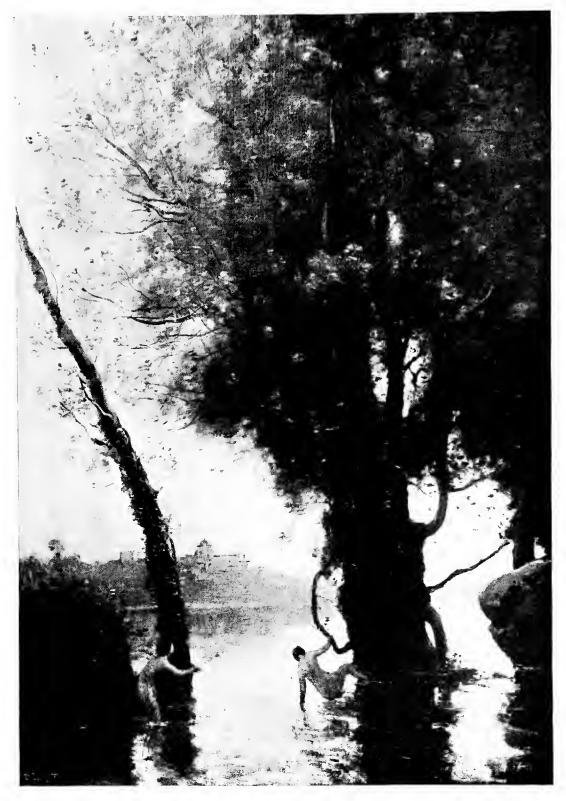
(Collection of A. T. Reid, Esq.)



(Collection of Alexander Young, Esq.)



(Collection of M. E. Lyon, Brussels, Photograph by Durand-Kuel, Paris and New York)



OIL PAINTING "WOMEN BATHING"



CHARCOAL DRAWING: "LANDSCAPE STUDY" c 37

(Collection of M. Léon J. F. Bonnat)



CHARCOAL DRAWING: "LANDSCAPE STUDY" c $_{38}$



CHARCOAL DRAWING: "SOUVENIR D'ITALIE"

(Collection of Charles Ricketts, Esq.)

C 39



CHARCOAL DRAWING: "LANDSCAPE STUDY"

(Ohach & Co , London)





ORIGINAL ETCHING "ITALIAN LANDSCAPE"



"BOAT UNDER THE WILLOWS" (ABOUT 1857)

C 43

From the Original Etching
(R. Gutekunst, London)





From the Original Picture (E. van Wisselingh, London)

OIL PAINTING: "LANDSCAPE STUDY" c 45









JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET. BY ARSÈNE ALEXANDRE.



CELEBRATED passage in Fromentin's book, "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," points directly to the art and work of Jean-François Millet. It contains such a collection of true ideas and wrong appreciations; it represents so well, in face of the imposing magnitude of that work, the opinion of a distinguished and a timorous spirit; and, lastly, it expresses so perfectly the difficulty experienced, at the moment of its

manifestation, by a great artistic fancy, in making itself understood even by the most intelligent men, however well disposed, that I feel bound to transcribe this passage, before considering anything else. By its very errors it will the better serve to prepare us for our study of the artist. I underline the more debatable points. Fromentin is comparing Dutch art with modern art. He says:

"A highly original painter of our day, one with a somewhat lofty soul, a melancholy spirit, a good heart and a genuinely rural nature, has expressed things about rustics and rustic life, about the hardships, the sadness and the nobility of their labour, such as never a Hollander would have thought of discovering. He has expressed these things in rather barbarous language, and in formulæ wherein the imagination has more vigour and clearness than the hand. dencies were found infinitely pleasing; and he was regarded among French painters as endowed with the sensibility of a Burns, somewhat lacking his ability to make himself understood. Finally, has he, yes or no, produced and left behind him really beautiful pictures? His form, his language—I mean that external envelope without which the works of the mind can have no being—does it possess those qualities necessary to make the *fine painter*, and to assure him that his work will endure? Beside Paul Potter and Cuyp he is a deep thinker; when one compares him with Terborg or with Metzu he is an interesting dreamer; there is about him something indescribable which is undoubtedly noble when one thinks of the trivialities of Steen or Ostade or Brouwer; as a man, he might make them blush, one and all: is he their equal as a painter?"

In the first place, I conceive that Fromentin in this criticism has been slightly misled by this special idea of his as to the beau peintre—

an expression which was very dear to him. To his mind—so far as one can gather—the "fine painter" is he who unites distinction with ease, who has not the bad taste to show emotion in public; who avoids exuberance and violence alike; who may conceivably be a grand seigneur, but, above all, must be a man of the world.

Now Fromentin, with his highly cultivated mind, regarded Rubens, Van Dyck and Terborg as "fine painters"; though, truth to tell, they were also something greater than that. He would have put Velasquez in the same rank, and not without reason, had he known him or paid more attention to his work. But Rembrandt, one can see, was not, in his opinion, a beau peintre; nor, assuredly, is Millet. Tis certainly a very brilliant and seductive notion, although somewhat restricted and scarcely designed to enable one to comprehend great genius; but particularly it has this drawback of bestowing the same title on artists of very unequal intellectual and moral worth. While Rubens and Van Dyck may, purely in respect of externals, be styled "fine painters," so one may put on the same list, longo sed proximus intervallo, this or that artist of our own day who could not be compared to Millet without inflicting ridicule on them and insult on him.

Starting from this conviction that Millet was not a "fine painter," Fromentin, a critic of eminence, and at times even of depth, despite the restrictions and the odd fancies which retard him in his search of the truth, naturally came to speak thus of the master with whom we are dealing. He was bound to consider "rather barbarous" a language which we, on the other hand, shall discover to be extremely well-chosen. By a sort of contradiction, which two lines off he does not appear to notice, he was forced to the conclusion that this barbarous language lacked vigour and clearness. Finally he was driven to ask if Millet had produced and would leave behind him beautiful pictures! I will not discuss the distinction he attempts to draw between certain Dutch "naturists" and the painter of Barbizon. Much might be said on the subject, for among the works of Cuyp and Terborg are some which are full of thought; furthermore, Fromentin greatly undervalues the grand philosophy and profound humour of Steen, the Molière of painting. But all this is apart from our real subject; suffice it to mention the matter in order to show that when criticism goes wrong, it does not go wrong by halves.

After this error on the part of a clear-seeing mind and a trained eye, one can understand how Millet's art, despite—or perhaps by very reason of—its grand simplicity, must needs be a sealed book so far as the public generally is concerned. There is no cause for astonish-

ment nor for indignation in the fact that great minds fail to be understood in their own time. Their contemporaries always see in them something involuntarily aggressive, something that shocks; in a word, they are antipathetic. The reason is of the simplest. Great minds throw out a force beyond themselves; whereas those who please the public simply absorb its external tastes and prejudices. It must be left to Time to perform, on behalf of ideas, the same service as distance does for the silhouette. You cannot understand a mountain with your nose against it; and few possess the privilege and the gift of being able to detach themselves sufficiently from their own period to live half-a-century ahead. Yet with regard to Millet there were certain minds of this type: artists like Rousseau, critics like Castagnary, understood Millet as we ourselves understand him, more or less, to-day. For this reason a study dealing with the author of the Glaneuses and the Homme à la houe may even now be something fresh and timely.

Now that we have spoken of Millet as though we knew him, let us talk of him as though he was unknown to us.

On the 4th of October, 1814, in the village of Gruchy, a dependence of the Commune of Gréville, in the neighbourhood of Cherbourg, was born a son of the soil. The district, the surroundings and the time are equally characteristic: as for the land, it is rich, ample agricultural soil, within sight of the boundless sea, presenting on the one hand a spectacle of deep, continuous labour, and on the other a spectacle of infinite imagination; and when an intelligent being takes part in this labour the result is a natural harmony, as penetrating as spontaneous, between the two elements. Now Millet, almost to his twentieth year, took his share of the family toil. drove the plough, was busy at seed-time and harvest, tended the beasts, and, in a word, lived the grave and humble peasant life to the France, which people choose to regard as gay and frivolous, is in more than one respect, when you know it well, both serious and meditative. Thus we must not consider this hard-working peasant lad, whose mind was nourished by deep and unconscious dreamings, as an exception among his race, but rather as a generalisation of its truest and most intimate qualities.

To these circumstances of birth are united those of his up-bringing. Herein he was no doubt to a certain extent privileged, but his case is not so rare, all the same, as some might imagine. We find as the head of the family a simple, practical, upright man, capable, while bravely facing all the responsibilities of life, of developing in his children that which is perhaps the highest of all human faculties—

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the faculty of admiration. We find a grandmother who seems to have been a woman as robust as she was tender, as tender as she was vigilant. The mother's family, while remaining rooted to the soil, to the true land of the peasantry, had produced in the previous century a savant and several priests. Such a case is frequent enough, indeed it is quite general. The French clergy is recruited principally from among the families of peasants and husbandmen. When the young peasant who has become a priest has the defects of his class it is impossible to imagine a human being more narrowminded, more obstinate, more devoid of ideas. But when, as sometimes happens, he is naturally quick-witted and good-natured, he displays an unparalleled charm of simplicity and candour and good-will. Millet's maternal uncle was one of these obscure and privileged beings. He had a deep influence on the destiny of the child, and, quite involuntarily, was the determining cause of his artistic career. The part he took in the formation of Millet's mind may be explained in the most natural manner: he taught him to read, instructed him in Latin, enabled him to understand Virgil, read the Bible with him, and left it in his hands. As for the accident which turned the child into a painter, it simply hung on the fact that this old Bible was adorned with engravings.

All this happened, of course, without pretension or premeditation. It is different, indeed, in the present day, when people begin to pose from their earliest years, and when every middle-class household, and soon every peasant family, will have produced at least one artist, or painter, or musician, or writer or actor. The honest folk whose acquaintance we have just made lived for themselves, without afterthought of any kind. Millet's uncle taught him Latin, and improved his mind, but with no idea beyond making a husbandman of him. He showed him how to think, just as his mother and his grandmother showed him how to walk: because it was useful and natural—that was all! But even a trifle like this is of capital importance—moreover, you may meet on the sea-shore a child of peasant parentage, with an uncle who is a curé, and teaches him to read an illustrated Bible; but this child will not necessarily become a Jean-François Millet. Nevertheless, when retrospectively one comes to know the artist's origins, they throw a much-needed light on his personality and on his work.

And, again, the period was equally well suited to the formation of the artist. The close of the preceding century, with Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the early days of the new century, with links still attaching it to certain traditions, which impelled towards intellectual





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emancipation, had paved the way to the expansion of certain general ideas; so that when, later, an artist like Millet strove to give them expression he was not regarded as an incomprehensible monstrosity. I do no more than make bare allusion to these points, the development of which would bring one too close to pure philosophy, but they certainly had as much influence in Millet's development as had the air he breathed and the family training he received.

I have insisted at some length on this question of origins; but in reality it constitutes, in conjunction with the chronology of his works, the whole biography of Millet. His story is above all one of a mind which may be seen to grow very, very slowly, to develop with much effort, to arrive at maturity after long patience, and to maintain and assert itself by dint of assiduous reflection. This spectacle, which brings us right to the heart of our subject, is indeed analogous to that offered by the cultivation of the land, that labour in which Millet took part; the plough regularly opening and softening the soil, and the crops springing up in due season after the long, continuous and mechanical mystery of the seed's travailing. Millet's life and career constitute an operation at once natural and well-He who later was to be the painter of the peasant was truly a peasant's son. Think how fine a thing it would be if only every artist, every historian, could thus develop normally in his own surroundings, instead of discovering a compass when there is scarce time to travel more!

What if the painter's early years were marked by many of the hesitations, the gropings, so to speak, which ever accompany the surest preparations and the most prosperous voyages? The young peasant's vocation was settled for him by the biblical pictures he began spontaneously to copy. What helped him was that his family raised no objection to this manifestation of his natural gifts. What spurred him on somewhat was that he found himself compelled, lacking the elements, to feel his way very cautiously at the start. At Cherbourg, where, after his simple imitations of engravings, he began to copy the pictures in the art gallery, Millet found in Langlois de Chévreville, a pupil of Baron Gros, more of a protector and a friend than a real teacher. No one taught him technique. Like honest Chardin of old, he was forced to "put on the paint till it looked like the model."

But, when one reflects upon it, was this really an impediment, particularly in the case of a meditative, determined and subjective nature like that of Millet? No; because in order to attain complete, strong and harmonious expression, it was both natural and

necessary that he should master bit by bit, and by his own effort alone, his language simultaneously with his imagination.

The second stage of this laborious formation was reached in Paris. M. Langlois obtained for his protégé a small grant from the municipality of Cherbourg, which was supplemented by a further subsidy from the department of La Manche. To this modest stipend the mother and the grandmother added their slender savings. The young man, still somewhat of a peasant, and not yet quite the artist, arrived in Paris towards the end of 1836, with 600 francs in his pocket.

Let it be noted, as a highly characteristic trait, that he was far from being enthusiastic of Paris. In his ears there ever rang so strongly the august symphony of the sea, in his eyes was so vivid a remembrance of the vast harmony of lines, the grandiose fulness of earth and sky, that our horizons must needs seem cramped and insignificant, our clamour very weak. He said as much in precise words: Paris seemed to him "doleful and dull."

Never was he to be altogether captivated by the city, and at once he began to maintain his freedom by frequent and regular communication with his native soil; also he decided to establish his quarters in some spot which, while not being too far from this Paris—the inevitable centre of all intellectual effort—should seem to him the most countrified and the most frankly rural. Thus at no period of his life could he be called a *déraciné*, as we term it nowadays; for, so to speak, he carried away and preserved with him the soil wherein his deepest roots had sprung and spread.

So far as his artistic technique is concerned it suffices to record that he studied at Paul Delaroche's atelier, and that, nevertheless, on his visits to the Louvre he was especially attracted and impressed by the Spanish masters. This opposition is singularly expressive. Certain it is that the bald, cold, historical painter could have had neither any sympathy with his uncivilised pupil, nor any power to inspire him; whereas Ribera, Zubaran and Velasquez must necessarily have been Millet's real masters—those one chooses, and not those that circumstances provide. Millet, therefore, like so many great and really original artists, was of a markedly autodidactic type. His lessons of thought he took in the country, his technical studies in the galleries of the Louvre. At the same time it must be understood that these two educations became amalgamated, and that while his long contemplation of Nature taught him how to paint, his association with the masters opened up, enlarged and smoothed the field of his fancy.

Thanks to these solitary studies his æsthetics became very exalted

and very conscious. He was not to be one of those artists who produce work of a sort without taking account of what they do, and are ignorant not only of the past but of themselves as well. While on this point I will anticipate in my chronology, and give a hitherto unpublished instance well worth noting here.

Our great painter Fantin-Latour has told me that in his youth he had the good fortune to go through the Louvre on several occasions with Millet, when the latter was already well on in years, and that the old painter moved him profoundly by the simplicity and at the same time the loftiness of his views on ancient art. For example, to the young artist who confessed he did not like Raphael's Archangel Michael, he explained the work in a few words, and with a gesture and a glance that said more than many speeches. "But look," said he "at that crushing fall, at that terrible landscape!" At that moment Millet must have had the "august gesture of the sower." I note too, as secondary, but very significant details, the taste Millet had for certain painters, whose most important works he would buy and keep before his eyes: the harshest and most eloquent of all the Spaniards, Greco*, and Hemessen, who in Flemish art brought dramatic expression and strength of modelling to a quite special degree of power. It seems to me that for those to whom a hint is sufficient to enable them to grasp these questions of artistic psychology these indications of Millet's tastes are full of importance, and are of much greater value than the extended biographical analyses long since published and obtainable everywhere.

But to resume our biography where we left it. In 1841, after having exhibited at the Salon of the previous year a Portrait of a Man which attracted no attention, Millet was compelled to return to Cherbourg, and one may guess it was not because he had made a fortune; indeed, at that time he was living and painting as best he could. It is curious to remark that, while never being an exact repetition, the life of all great artists has always certain points in common. Think of the young Watteau, forced to turn out his Saint-Francis by the dozen; of the young François Millet accepting the meagre portrait-work offered him, and not refusing even to daub a signboard. At least one can see that in this work, which may be judged by the portraits of that period which have been preserved, Millet always strove after robust, solid execution—never afraid of over-assertion or of giving plenty of body to his subject. But it is sad rather than surprising to find Millet, on his return to Paris

^{*} The admirable Greco owned by Millet is now in the collection of M. Degas. It is, as one sees, a work which has had an uncommon career.

soon afterwards, striving to please! He wanted to do what should be acceptable. That rough hand, which had driven the plough with so much vigour, now clumsily tried to twirl the dandy's cane!

He did an Offrande à Pan, and was represented at the Salon of 1844 by a Leçon d'Equitation and a Laitière, which the celebrated and clear-sighted Thoré described as "a pretty sketch in the Boucher manner!" This was certainly the most painful period in his life. In 1846 the Salon jury rejected his Saint-Jérome, represented as being

tempted by all sorts of alluring feminine apparitions. And this was neither the first nor the last time that the same thing occurred. A good deal has been said about the injustice of it all. Certainly Millet was rejected by the Salon juries. But that is no longer of any importance, and we have neither time nor space now to wax indignant thereat. This Saint-Jérome was in a sort of way symbolical: it was the artist's last effort to be "pleasing." On the same canvas, heroically scraped, the painter next produced a strong and harsh picture, styled Œdipe détaché de l'Arbre, which appeared in the Salon of 1847. He, too, had overcome temptation, and was now on the eve of becoming master of himself, fully and finally.

Thus the Vanneur was the work of the true Millet, painter, poet and philosopher, who was to tell and sing the life of the man of the fields, and paint—to use his own expression—as the "cry of the

earth" should inspire him.

The conception was at once novel and powerful. It may almost be said, seeing the rarity, the exceptional character, of any precedent, that the peasant, his labours, his stunted, shapeless existence, had never before been regarded as capable of furnishing an exclusive element of art; no one had realised that from out a gross clod of earth a statue full of grandeur might arise. The famous passage in La Bruyère is cited as an exception to the literary and artistic consciousness of humanity hitherto prevailing: "One sees certain wild animals, males and females, scattered over the country, black, livid and scorched by the sun, bound to the soil they dig and turn with invincible obstinacy; they have something like articulate speech, and when they rise to their feet they reveal a human face, and, in fact, they are men. . . ." And yet La Bruyère, despite the strange and startling sonority of this cry, uttered, as though by chance, from his heart, was the first to be incredulous and reluctant to admit the idea that those lines of his might be the germ of hundreds of books, hundreds of pictures. As for the painters, they, although it is their function to see and describe everything, had simply regarded the fields as a setting for their pictures and the peasants therein as super-







numeraries. In the paintings of Benozzo Gozzoli in the Campo Santo at Pisa, this labour of the fields and that of the vineyards—in a way the most aristocratic form of agriculture—is reproduced with perfect exactness, in a spirit of pagan nobility which is precisely the opposite of the doctrine inaugurated by Millet; the object in the one case being to embellish, and in the other to extract beauty from the very absence of all embellishment. The Middle Ages have bequeathed to us in France, in the form of illuminations of manuscripts and cathedral sculpture, certain simple and sincere pictures of the movements and the attitudes of the peasant at work. But the very candour and absence of *intention* in these productions of such precious naturalness distinguishes them from the works of Millet, who never painted save with a definite object in view. Again, in the Avenue de Middelharnis, that masterpiece of Hobbema's in the National Gallery, and in that other most moving masterpiece, so far removed from its own period, the Repas de Paysans, by Le Nain, in the Louvre, we have the only really purely rustic works of art—rustic to the exclusion of all idea of arrangement, that existed before those of Millet, and that present, almost involuntarily, that character of absolute simplicity and ample generalisation which the later painter, of set purpose, introduced into his canvases.

There is the real key to that work, there the whole explanation of its import. Millet has given a very good account of it himself. He has explained the matter in striking terms, and one of his phrases sums up all his efforts and all his genius: he has tried, he says, to depict "the fundamental side of men and things."

Elsewhere, on the subject of the Homme à la houe and the criticisms it evoked, he affirms his strong conviction even more precisely. "There are those who say I deny the country its charms. . . I can see clearly enough the aureole of the marigold, and the sun away down yonder, very, very far over the land, spreading its glory amid the clouds; but just as clearly I see on the plain below the steaming horses at work, and on that rocky spot a weary man, whose panting one has heard since morning, and who now tries to stand erect a moment and breathe. The drama is enveloped in splendour."

Again, what could be more precise than this? "I have been reproached for not observing the *detail*; I see it, but I prefer to construct the *synthesis*, which as an artistic effort is higher and more robust. You reproach me with insensibility to charm; why, I open

^{*} The word used by Millet is "errené," a peasant's word for éreinté—utterly tired out.

your eyes to that which you do not perceive, but which is none the less real: the dramatic."

I will take another of Millet's letters. No doubt it is well known, but it cannot be quoted too often, cannot be graven too deep on the very core of any study devoted to him. It reveals his whole soul, his whole mind. "In the Femme qui vient puiser de l'Eau I have endeavoured that she shall be neither a water-carrier, nor even a servant, but the woman who comes to draw water for the house, the water for her husband's and her children's soup; that she shall seem to be carrying neither more nor less than the weight of the full buckets; that beneath the sort of grimace which is natural on account of the strain on her arms, and the blinking of her eyes caused by the light, one may see a look of rustic kindliness on her face. I have always shunned, with a kind of horror, everything approaching the sentimental; I have desired, on the other hand, that this woman should perform simply and good-naturedly, without regarding it as irksome, an act which, like her other household duties, is one she is accustomed to perform every day of her life. Also I wanted to make people imagine the freshness of the well, and that its antiquated appearance should make it clear that many, before her, had come to draw water from it." I have been led to quote this last most charming phrase, although it interrupts our analysis, because we see in it the true painter's touch. It is as though we really had before our eyes Millet's wonderful green, that subtle mixture of colours and oils whereby he expressed the rich, smooth aspect, the warm-coloured age, of those accessories of rural life, which have been in use from generation to generation. . . .

For the rest, it is not necessary to dwell longer on this essential side of Millet's work; everything we have seen in the course of our examination will have prepared us to understand him: his studious, pensive childhood, his laborious, introspective youth; his manhood, solitary and nurtured by toil and meditation. In solitude it is that general ideas best come to life. There is one word to add to this moral portrait which I have attempted to sketch. It is not rare, especially in our own time, for an artist to devise a complete system to which he applies and subordinates, and by which he controls, everything he produces. But more often than not this system enchains the artist or ruins his work. Millet offers us the magnificent spectacle—wherein all his grandeur lies—of a man, a system, and a work all on the same level.

That solitude which, dangerous as it is for others, proved so fertile in Millet's case, was deliberately sought by him and maintained to the end of his life. In 1849 he settled down at Barbizon, and practically never left it except to go to Cherbourg and to Paris on business. Thus his life became one of sublime monotony. His entire story, devoid of spicy anecdotes, adventures, or dramatic situations, is contained, as I have already said, in the chronology of his works. It differs in no way, indeed, from that of his humble models—object and result apart. Like his peasant neighbours he dug and toiled and sowed day by day; like them, in the patriarchal manner, he brought up a numerous family; like them he reaped his bread by the sweat of his brow; farmer of the mind, he loyally paid his lord and master, the public, a splendid rent, in the shape of works enriching the heart of humanity; while the wages he was able to earn for himself materially did no more than suffice to let him and his live in honourable humbleness.

More than once Millet knew the meaning of want. 'Tis a story old as Art itself, and although it may seem foolish to wax indignant about it now, one may well feel sad at the thought. So strong is the contrast between these struggles and the imposing auction sales —to two of the most celebrated of which I am going to refer—that although cool and practical people may find nothing abnormal in such a state of things, they must at least admit that it is monstrous. In 1851, continuing the series of his great agrarian poems—his "Georgics in paint," as Théophile Gautier so happily described them—Millet exhibited his Semeur; in 1853 he displayed, or at least finished, the Tondeuse de Moutons, the Berger, and the Moissonneuses. Considerations of space forbid me to analyse these lovely works, whose common character I attempted just now to point out. The year 1855 saw the production of that notable work, the Paysan greffant un Arbre. If the little old fellow on the roadside, so admirably caught and realised by Hobbema in his Middelharnis, brings many real and human things to the mind, how profound are the meditations on humanity evoked by this peasant in the foreground, and, in presence of his wife and child, seeming, as Gautier said, to be performing "a rite in some mystic ceremony, as though he were the high priest of a rural divinity!"

Well, this work was admired by certain advanced minds, and caused an intense sensation among the really great artists of the day, but it did not bring Millet even the most modest sum. Some day the fine action I am about to relate will become classical, as are the noble deeds one recites to children to train their minds towards lofty sentiment. It was an artist who bought the picture; and how delicately it was done! Théodore Rousseau it was who sent a

messenger to Millet with four thousand francs, offered for the Greffeur by an imaginary American; and thus Millet was saved in the hour of trouble. This picture, for which the author would never have got four, nor even two, wretched thousand-franc notes, had he not chanced upon a great-hearted comrade, was sold at the Hartmann Sale in 1881 for 133,000 francs.

There is something simple and heroic in the friendship between Rousseau and Millet. It is the more remarkable inasmuch as there were great contrasts between the two men, and they never absolutely confided in one another, after having become intimate very slowly. On the one side unrest, on the other the reflective mind; with Rousseau, perpetual quest, amounting almost to a disease; with Millet, strength confident of itself, decision once arrived at; on the one hand an analytical mind of the finest; on the other, one of the most splendidly synthetical. How well it fits in the life of Millet, this superb, virile harmony, and how greatly preferable to mere amusing anecdote or romantic adventure.

With regret I must pass by works like those produced in 1857, which of themselves might well afford a subject for long and profitable consideration. Let me simply make the two following essential points, for the benefit of such as may desire to go deeply into the matter. In the Glaneuses there is quite a study to be made of the rhythm of line in Millet's work. In this picture everything is of set purpose, and everything in it is natural; it is intense in its poetry, but with a hidden framework rigorously geometrical, absolutely exact in its mechanism. If it were not so cunningly constructed it would be less poetical; were it less poetical it would not be so

rigorously true, so perfectly live.

In the Parc aux Moutons and in the Berger ramenant son Troupeau la Nuit I may observe that the painter has essayed one of the most difficult problems in painting—difficult to such an extent that the Impressionist School, all its other merits notwithstanding, has completely avoided it. Yet surely the impressions we feel per amica silentia lunæ are among the most moving, the most troublantes of all. But that stirring of the senses, we feel when a poet describes the night, cannot, it would seem, be expressed nor called forth by painting. The Angelus (1859) is the other great example of the immoral destiny of works of art. The expression is somewhat strong perhaps, but I let it stand. Consider that, when first produced, this picture—the most famous of them all—did not even find a buyer; at least, in the course of its much-travelled career it was almost as often exchanged as sold. An American was to have bought it for the

agreed sum of 1500 francs, but backed out of his bargain. So Millet parted with it for 1000 francs. It passed from hand to hand. In 1864 it was taken in exchange. Then its price began to rise: 1800 francs, then 12,000, then 38,000, then 160,000, then 553,000, and finally 800,000. Draw what conclusions you will from these figures; the choice is so large as to be embarrassing.

By way of ending my chronology of the principal works I will simply mention that to the Angelus period—the date of Millet's fullest maturity-belong also the Becquée, the Tondeuse de Moutons, and the Tueurs de Cochons. This last-named work, so dramatic in its veracity, is the only one in which the artist showed a trace of satire or human bitterness; for it is clear that he has made the butchers' faces bear a resemblance to that of their victim. The Homme à la Houe, mentioned above, dates from 1863. In 1865 Millet, more by accident than by choice, had a singular return to the subjects of his youth. He was commissioned to decorate a dining-room, and executed three panels and a ceiling, representing the Seasons, in the form of mytho-Daphnis and Chloe, Ceres, L'Amour mouillé and a logical scenes. This latter, which formed the ceiling, is now in the possession of the King of the Belgians. Also to be mentioned as forming part of this somewhat exceptional work is the Agar, which figures in the superb collection of the painters of 1830 got together by the Dutch marine painter M. Mesdag. And whereas the Agar is powerful and dark in colour, Millet has tried to make the other panels as bright and genial in tone as possible. But some commanding natures there are to whom the gift of pleasing has been denied. At the same time, although the reproaches addressed to Millet respecting a certain heaviness of colour may be justified over this dining-room decoration, in which the gloom is intensified by the floral tints lavished around it, I refuse to agree with any such criticism in so far as the other works are concerned—works in which the colouring is perfectly adequate to the design and to the execution.

broad colourations and in his sculptural design. In this connection it must be mentioned, however briefly, that pastels and drawings in black or in colours form a considerable part of Millet's achievement. A whole article would not be too much to devote to the drawings alone, and were the opportunity ever to arise I should be glad to undertake the task. One would then be able to analyse still more thoroughly Millet's whole philosophy, so humane,

If there is a little tenderness in his colour at times it is always masculine and robust; Millet took no heed of atmospheric analyses, but his strong synthetical faculties assert themselves both in his

м xiii

so nobly sympathetic. One would then see that not one of the little incidents in the intimate life of the instinctive being failed to reveal to him its significance and its beauty; that labour of all kinds, in field and forest and farm, was regarded by him, in its general import, as forming part of the great and durable rites of the soil.

Meanwhile let me at least mention among the pastels the Veillée the Baratteuse, and that terrible one called Hiver, a poem the constituents of which are a ploughed field under a heavy sky, with a harrow lying neglected in the foreground. Really nothing could be grander and more dramatic; and, as is the case with most of the very great things in art—every one has seen such a thing—one man alone could have given it expression.

As for the drawings, the importance Millet attached to them may be judged by the fact that to a series of the best-known among them he gave the somewhat imposing and systematic title, L'Epopée des Champs. At that period of his life Millet certainly had a right to use such a title, for he was indeed an epic poet, one of the few living in our time. One stands bewildered when one re-reads the criticisms of the day—true, there is no need to re-read them—in which they talk of the bestiality of Millet's figures, of his gross naturalism, and so forth. On the other hand, by way of consolation, we find certain minds more enthusiastic, and it were worth many pages to have written the fine phrase that Castagnary wrote: "Do you remember his Reaper? He might have reaped the whole earth!"

From 1870 onwards Millet ceased to exhibit. During the "Année Terrible" he stayed in Cherbourg, where he painted some fine and tragic sea-pieces. He returned to Barbizon in 1871, and from 1872 till his death in 1875 his powers and his capacity for work declined. To quote the critic I have just mentioned, who in a few words traced Millet's complete silhouette: "Thus passed this man, nurtured by the Bible, severe as a patriarch, as kind as just, ardent as an apostle, simple as a child."

One word more. The State, realising only on the eve of his death the magnitude of Millet's genius, had resolved to commission him to decorate the Chapel of Sainte-Geneviève in the Panthéon. At this Millet was profoundly happy: but Death would not grant that the great painter of the shepherds should retell the touching story of the sublimest of shepherdesses. Puvis de Chavannes it was who was then chosen. It is perhaps unique in the history of art that out of such a loss should spring such consolation.

Arsène Alexandre.

THE ETCHINGS OF J. F. MILLET. By FREDERICK KEPPEL.



HE finished original etchings done by Jean-François Millet are only thirteen in number. Besides these we have from his hand some eight minor prints, which can hardly be called pictures at all, but are merely what the French call griffonnements, or experimental scribblings done on a copper plate with the etching needle or the drypoint, similar in character to those which Rembrandt himself sometimes

took a fancy to execute. Millet also tried his hand at both lithography and wood-engraving. The three lithographs which he has left us are finished compositions; and one of these, Le Semeur—a man sowing grain in a field—ranks as one of his finest prints.

In wood-engraving Millet confined himself to experimenting with the tools upon the wood block; and the fine woodcuts often ascribed to him were in reality engraved, from his design and under his direct guidance, by one or the other of his two brothers, Pierre or Jean-Baptiste Millet. He had the intelligence to perceive that the laboured and over-elaborate woodcuts of his own day were no more than inadequate imitations of engravings on copper or steel, and so he brought back wood-engraving to the broad and bold simplicity which had been so triumphantly practised by Albert Dürer three centuries before.

Still another process which Millet tried for the purpose of multiplying prints from his original design was heliography. Corot and Daubigny also practised the same method. The artist drew his design upon a piece of glass which had been rendered opaque by means of a black varnish covered with powdered white lead. Duplicates of the design were made in the same way in which a photographer prints from his negative, and the result had all the characteristics of a photograph.

If this were not an illustrated publication it would here be in order to give a detailed description of each of Millet's etchings. Words are very well in their way, but in a subject like the present one a little pictorial reproduction of some etching will convey more truth to the reader than could the eloquent "word-painting" of John Ruskin himself. The illustrations here presented, even if they

M XV

were the finest ever produced, would naturally fall short of the original proofs from which they were copied. The necessary reduction in size of some of the etchings is, of course, a serious drawback; but if these reproductions were in every respect as fine as the originals, why, each copy of this special number of The Studio would be cheap at a hundred guineas! Admitting, however, these unavoidable drawbacks in the illustrations, the respectful suggestion of the present writer to the reader is that he look at them. If they do not speak convincingly for themselves, as being thoroughly original both in design and execution, then the writer's attempt at mere verbal description and comment would be hopeless indeed. Many fairly good contemporary etchings are neglected—and justly neglected—because, at best, they are no more than disguised imitations of the work of some bigger man. A witty reviewer once characterised an exhibition of etchings as being "mainly

neglected—because, at best, they are no more than disguised imitations of the work of some bigger man. A witty reviewer once characterised an exhibition of etchings as being "mainly penny-Whistlers," and these etchings were, for this reason, of no greater value than a child's penny whistle, because they lacked the supreme quality of originality. Such an imitator was well characterised by Dr. Johnson on the occasion when some one had asserted that the writings of a certain contemporary poet were like those of John Dryden and were quite as fine. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "he may make Dryden's report, but he does not carry his bullet." Now both the detonation of Millet's gun and the bullet which flew from it were all his own. We may or we may not admire these etchings of his, but at least they are the uninfluenced expression of his own honest conception and vision.

While Rembrandt seldom or never etched a composition which he had painted, or painted one which he had etched, Millet's method was quite the opposite. When an artistic conception pleased him he often utilised it in various "moods and tenses," and the writer is informed by a son and a daughter of the master that several of their father's works were first etched and the design afterwards repeated in aquarelle or pastel or in oils. With regard to the latter, it is well known that Millet's habit was to keep his paintings in hand for years, working on several of them in turn according to his mood for the time being.

The eminent American author, Mrs. Schuyler van Rensselaer when writing on this same subject, says: "In etching a subject which he had previously painted Millet did not try to reproduce the painting; he merely tried to give fresh expression, with a different artistic method, to a conception already once expressed with paint. Each etching stands on its own merit as an etching, as

m xvi





frankly and simply as though no painting of the same subject were in existence. Millet's truly artistic nature shows itself in the fact that he went thus about his work. And the breadth and versatility of that nature is convincingly proved by the intrinsic excellence of these etchings in conjunction with the intrinsic excellence of the corresponding pictures. A man who had given his whole life to etching only, who had never thought of painting, and had never cared for those effects proper to painting and not to etching, could not have been more truly and markedly a born etcher than Millet showed himself to be—few though were the plates and many though were the canvases he worked upon.

"To depend upon lines, not tones, for expression; to make every line 'tell,' and to use no more lines than are absolutely needed to tell exactly what he wants to say; to speak strongly, concisely and to the point; to tell us much while saying little; to suggest rather than to elaborate, but to suggest in such a way that the meaning shall be very clear and individual and impressive—these are the things the true etcher tries to do. And these are the things that Millet did with a more magnificent power than any man, perhaps, since Rembrandt. Other modern etchings have more charm than his—none have quite so much feeling. Others show more grace and delicacy of touch—none show more force or certainty, and none a more artistic 'economy of means.' Compare one of these prints with the corresponding picture, and you will feel, more deeply than ever before, how much more important was the intellectual than the technical side of Millet's art."

A well-known painter, in speaking of Millet's etchings, said to the writer: "I like them even better than his paintings; when he was painting he was thinking of his colour, but when he was etching he was thinking of his drawing"; and, as in music, beautiful melody must ever be the fundamental germ and the living soul of the composition, so, in the making of a picture, personal and masterly drawing is the essential sine qua non.

The year 1860 was a memorable one for etching. Millet was then doing his best work, Meryon's finest plates had recently been etched, though his Rue Pirouette is dated 1860. Charles Jacque's Grande Bergerie was done in 1859, and such masterpieces as Sir Seymour Haden's By-road in Tipperary and the Shere Millpond, as well as Mr. Whistler's Rotherhithe and his portrait in drypoint of the engraver Riault, all bear the date of 1860. In Mr. Whistler's case this date is buttressed, before and after, by the Black Lion Wharf, Bibi Lalouette and Bibi Valentin, which were done in 1859, while the

m xvii

famous drypoint *The Forge* is dated 1861. In the year 1860, Millet, Jacquemart, Bracquemond, and Legros were all in the prime of their power as etchers. Gaillard had already begun his admirable original work with the burin, and in England some of Samuel Palmer's beautiful etched landscapes had already appeared.

It would be well if a historical circumstance connected with Millet could be set right. After the master's death in 1875 his friend and biographer, Alfred Sensier, sold at public auction his collection of Millet's works at an immense profit on the prices which he had paid for them. Hence arose the story that Sensier had unmercifully exploited Millet, taking advantage of the artist's necessities. It is quite true that during the long years when Millet was glad to sell his pictures at any price however small, Sensier was one of the very few who had the intelligence to buy them. But the writer of this article, being deeply interested in all that concerns Millet, has consulted a son and a daughter of the master on this question. Monsieur Charles Millet, the Paris architect, frankly states that his father always gratefully recognised the sympathy and the aid of Alfred Sensier; and his elder sister, Madame Saignier, who was a grown-up woman before her father's death, declares that Millet taught his children to love and esteem Alfred Sensier "next after le bon Dieu."

In the city of Cork the Irish driver of a jaunting-car was agreeably surprised when the gentleman who had hired him also gave him a helping hand with a heavy trunk. "A little help is betther than a power o' pity, sorr," is what the Irishman said. Millet sorely needed help. Some who could have helped him merely pitied him, and—like the priest and the Levite in the parable—"passed by on the other side." It Sensier was only a Samaritan, he was a Good Samaritan, because he helped the man who had "fallen among thieves."

FREDERICK KEPPEL.



CRAYON STUDY "A SIESTA"



MILLET

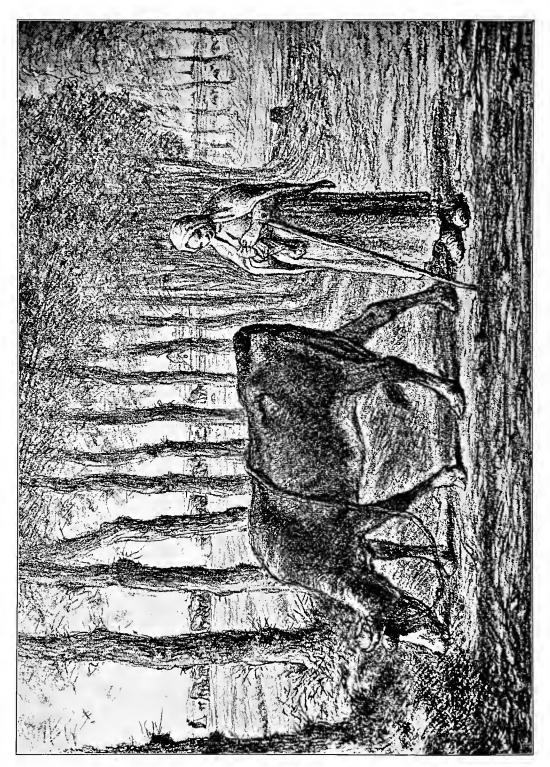






CRAYON STUDY "THE POTATO HARVEST"

(Cottier and Co., New York and London)



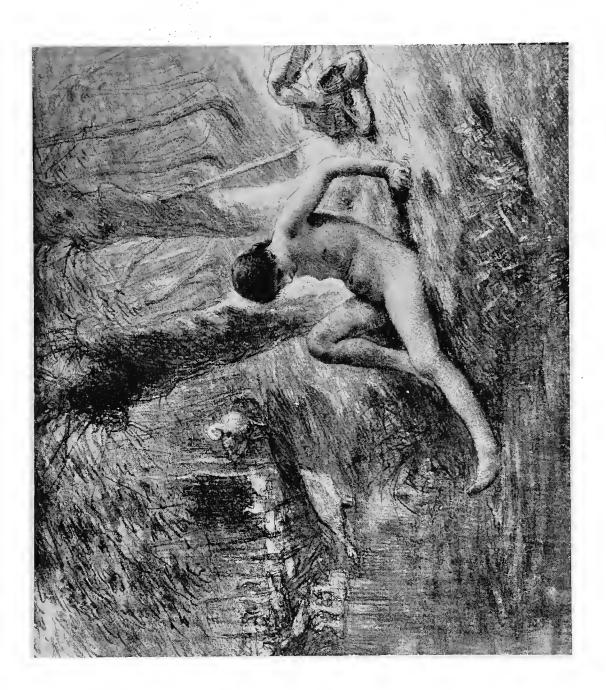


(Cottier and Co., New York and London)

MILLET

CRAYON STUDY "THE TRAVELLERS"



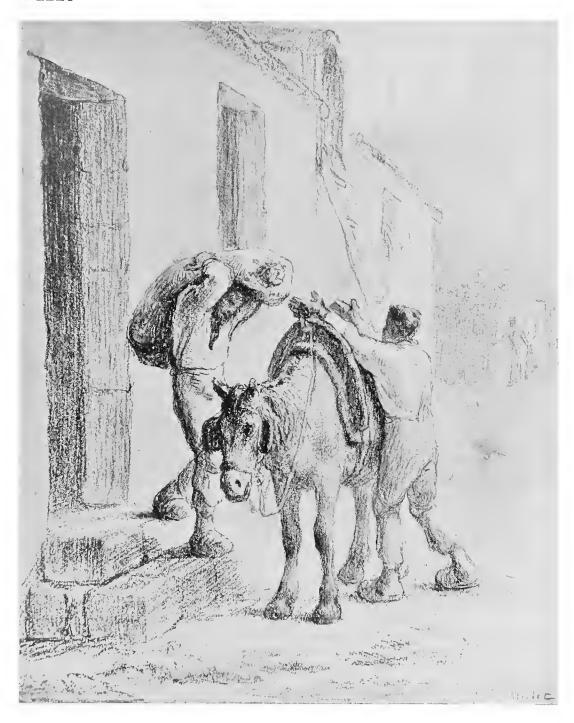


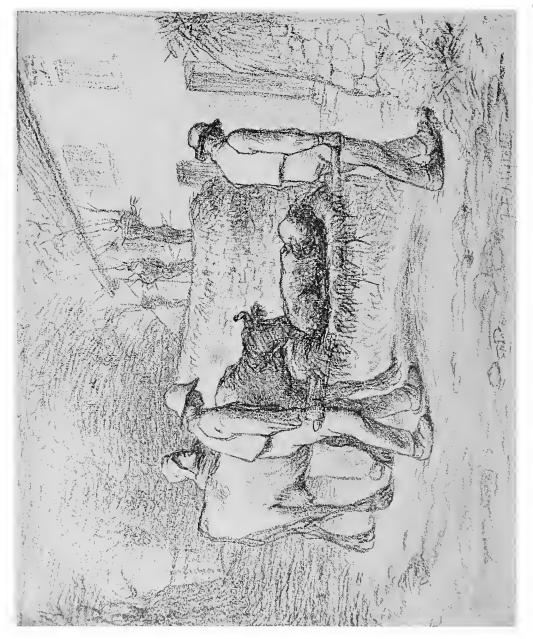
MILLET

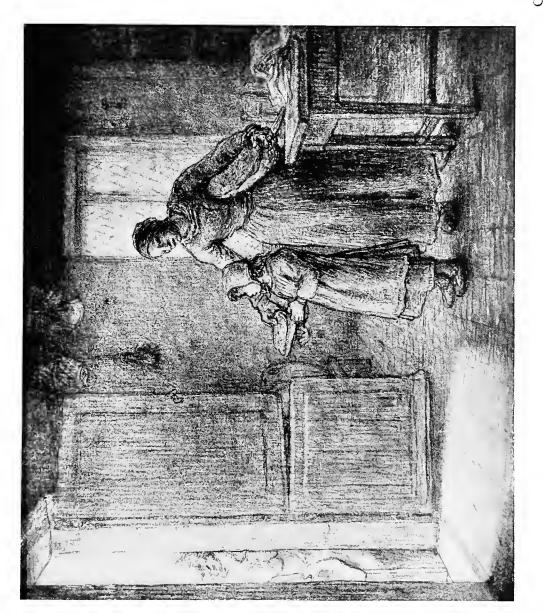


CRAYON STUDY "CALLING IN THE HERD"

MILLET









CRAYON STUDY "WASHING DAY"





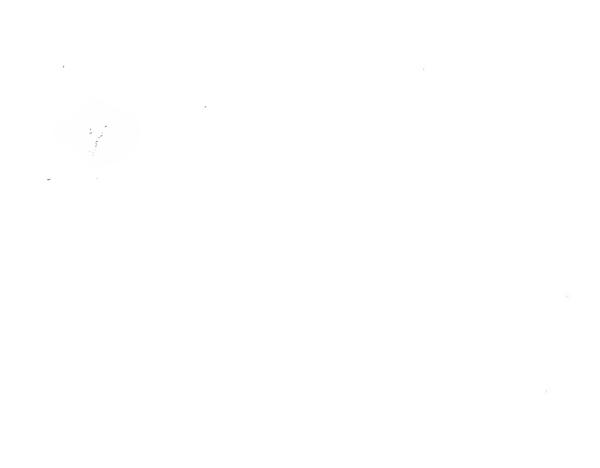
CRAYON STUDY
"GIRL CHURNING"

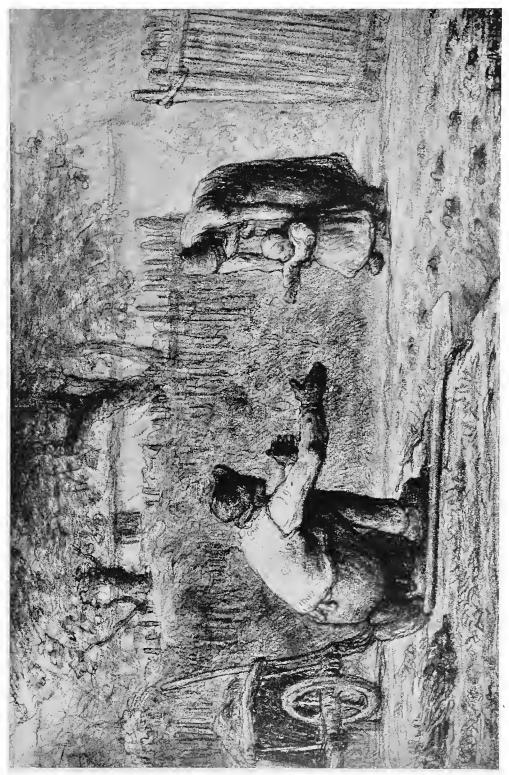
M 16



J. F. Millet 1861.











(Sensier's "Jean François Millet")

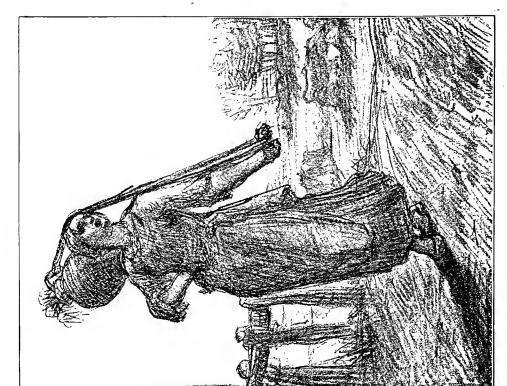
CRAYON STUDY: "GIRL BATHING"



CRAYON STUDY: "WASHERWOMEN"



CRAYON STUDY: "A LITTLE SHEPHERDESS" (E. van Wisselingh, the Dutch Gallery, London) M 21

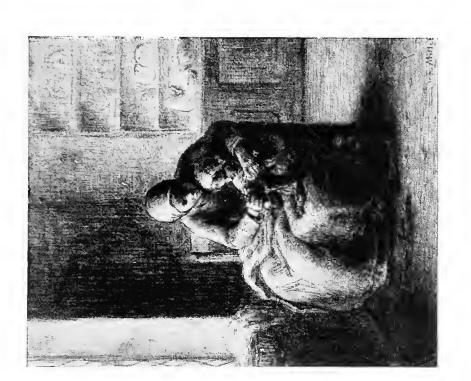


CRAYON STUDY: (Sensier's "Jean François Millet")

"CARRYING MILK"









CRAYON STUDY: (E. van Wisselingh, London)

"A LESSON IN KNITTING"

CRAYON STUDY:

(E. van Wisselingh, London)

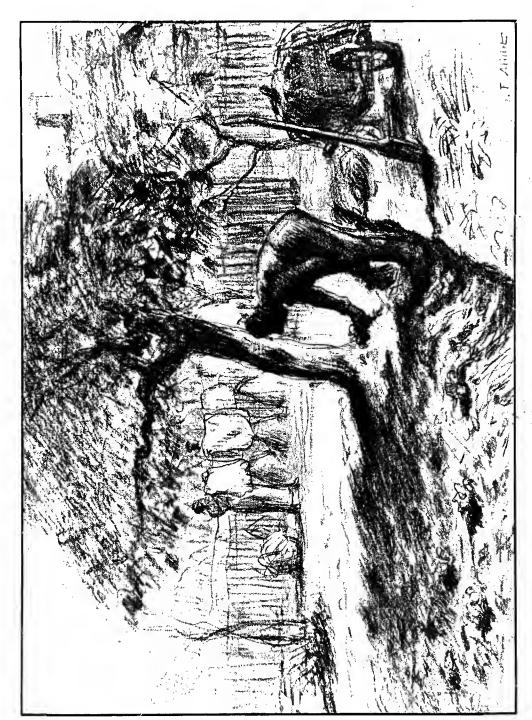
M 23

"MOTHER AND CIILD" M 24



(Collection of M. Henri Rouart)







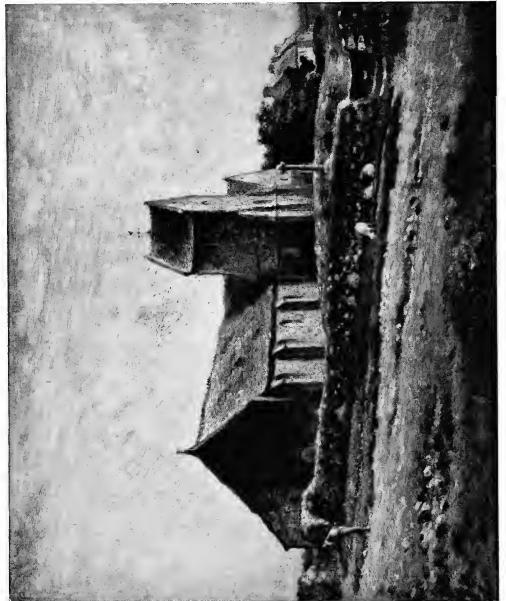


MILLET

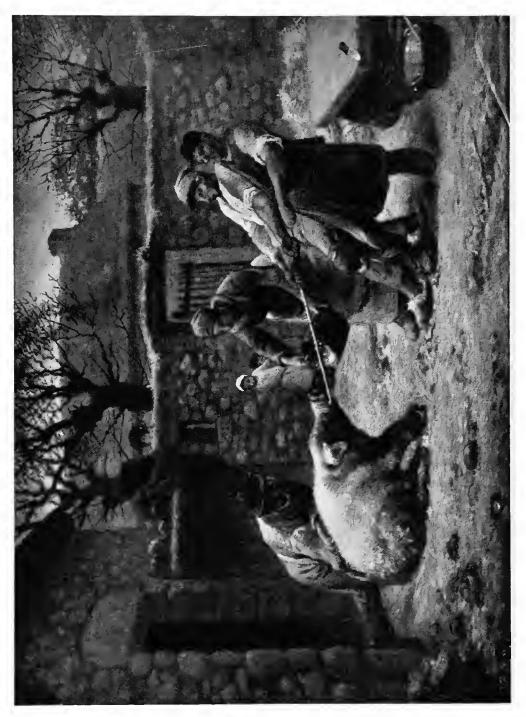




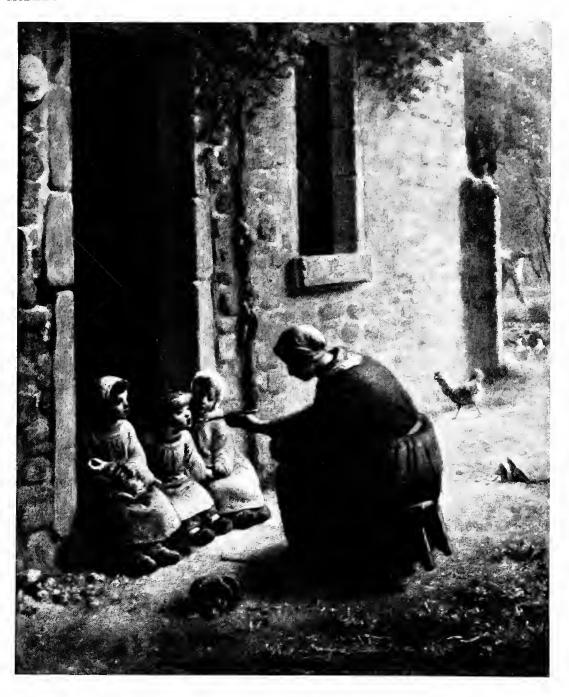
OIL PAINTING "PARISH CHURCH AT GREVILLE"



(Braun, Clément, Paris, Original in the Louvre)



OIL PAINTING, 1867-69 "THE PIG-KILLERS"





CRAYON STUDY: "ŒDIPUS BEING TAKEN
DOWN FROM THE TREE"
(From the Skitch in the Collection of Morley Pegge, Esq.)

MILLET

(From Ed. Hedouin's Etching after the Original Picture)

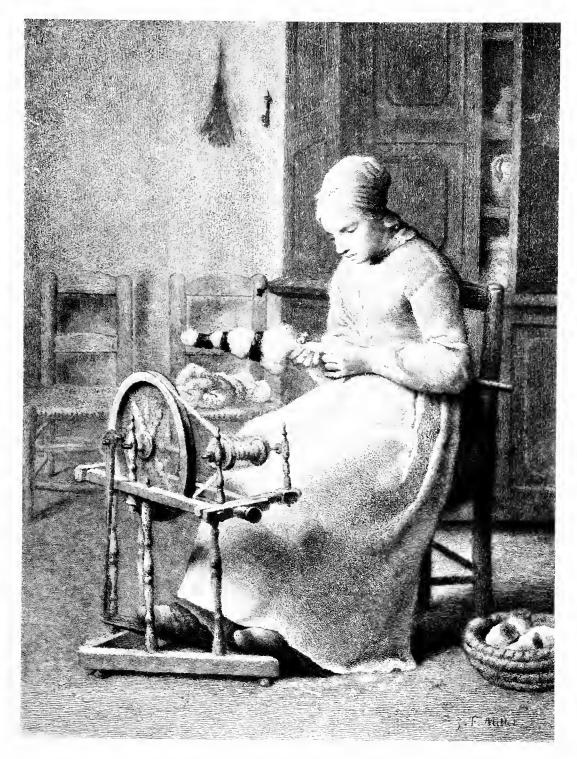




OIL-PAINTING (1859): "DEATH AND THE WOODMAN." FROM E. HÉDOUIN'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PAINTING



OIL-PAINTING: "DRAWING WATER" FROM F. BRACQUEMOND'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE



OIL-PAINTING: "PEASANT WOMAN SPINNING." FROM BEN DAMMAN'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE





MILLET

AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING (Societe Anonyme des Galeries Georges Pelit) FROM F. BRACQUEMOND'S ETCHING

"THE LAMB"

M 40

AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE
(Societé Anonyme des Galeries Georges Petit) FROM F. BRACQUEMOND'S ETCHING



OIL-PAINTING: "THE SHEPHERDESS" FROM BEN DAMMAN'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE







"THE SOWER" FROM THE ORIGINAL SKETCH (Ionides Bequest, South Kensington)

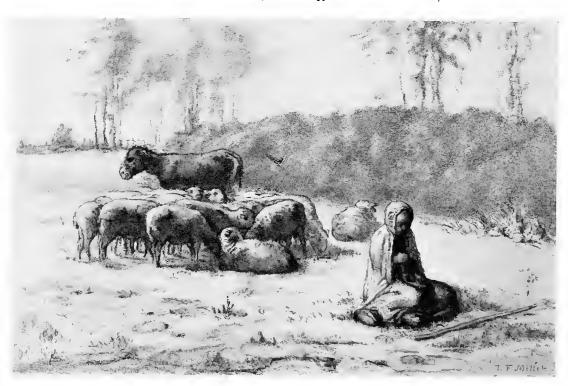
FROM CHARLES COURTRY'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL PICTURE

M 44

M 45



"WOMAN SEWING" FROM MILLET'S ORIGINAL ETCHING, 1855
M 46 (Frederick Keppel, New York and London)

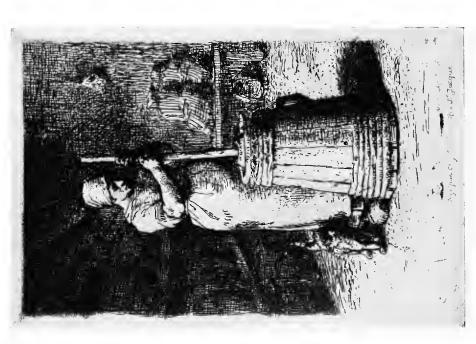


"A YOUNG SHEPHERDESS"

FROM F. BRACQUEMOND'S ETCHING AFTER THE ORIGINAL DRAWING (Societé Anonyme des Galeries Georges Petit)



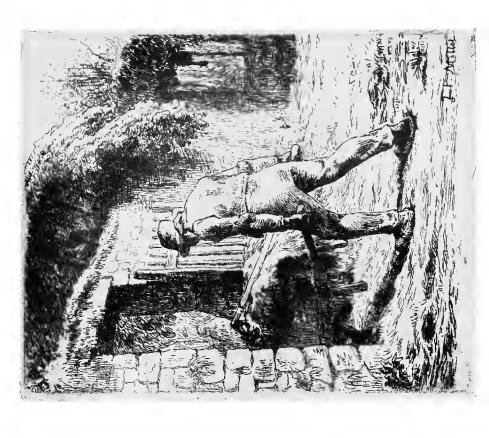




ETCHING, 1855, SECOND STATE (Frederick Keppel, New York and London) FROM THE ORIGINAL

"CHURNING"

M 48



"MAN WITH A WHEELBARROW" ETCHING, 1855 (Frederick Keppel, New York and London) FROM THE ORIGINAL



ORIGINAL ETCHING (1863) "PEASANTS STARTING FOR WORK." THIRD STATE



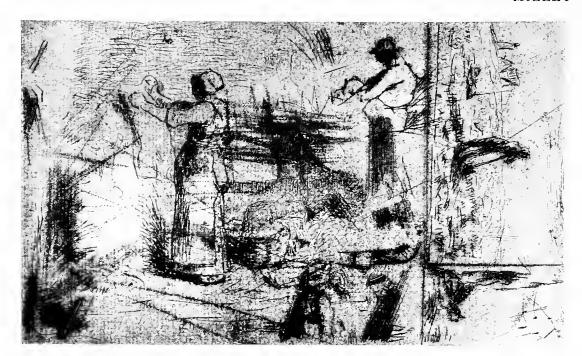


ORIGINAL ETCHING "TRIAL SKETCHES" (Ionides Bequest, South Kensington) M 52

"A SHEPHERDESS SEATED"
M 53

ORIGINAL ETCHING (Ionides Bequest, South Kensington)





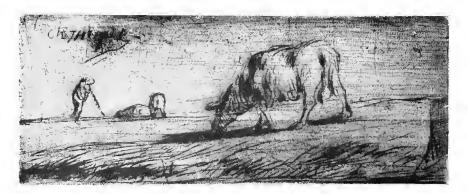
"TRIAL SKETCHES" $_{\text{M}}$ 55

FROM THE ORIGINAL ETCHING



"THE TWO COWS"

FROM THE ORIGINAL ETCHING, FOURTH STATE



FROM THE ORIGINAL DRY-POINT, 1849. SECOND STATE

"SHEEP AND COW GRAZING" м 57













"DIGGER RESTING"

From the Original Etching (Collection of Dr. T. W. T. Lawrence)



"THE PEACE-MAKER"

From the Water-Colour Sketch (The Autotype Co., New Oxford Street, London)



WATER-COLOUR: "LANDSCAPE STUDY"

(Ionides Bequest, South Kensington)

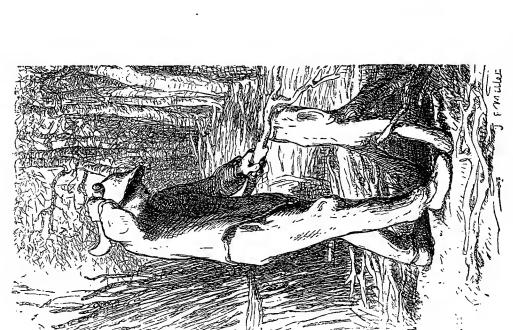
м 63



WATER-COLOUR: "LANDSCAPE STUDY"

(Ionides Bequest, South Kensington)





WOODCUT: "FAGGOTTING"

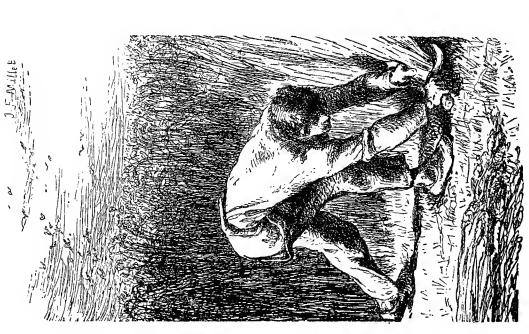
(Drawn by Millet on the Wood, Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)

WOODCUT: "TRUSSING"

и 67

99 N

(Drawn by Millet on the Wood. Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)





M 68

(Drawn by Millet on the Wood. Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)

(Drawn by Millet on the Wood. Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)





WOODCUT: "SHEARING"

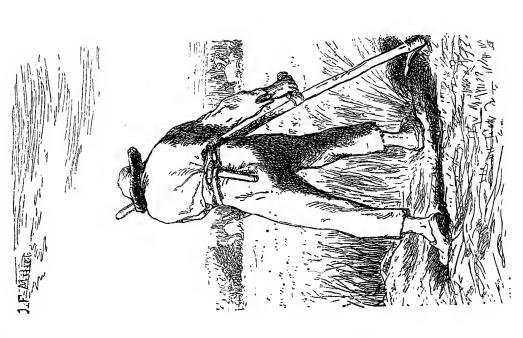
M 70

(Drawn by Millet on the Wood. Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)

WOODCUT: "FLAX-CRUSHING" (Drawn by Millet on the Wood. Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)

м 71



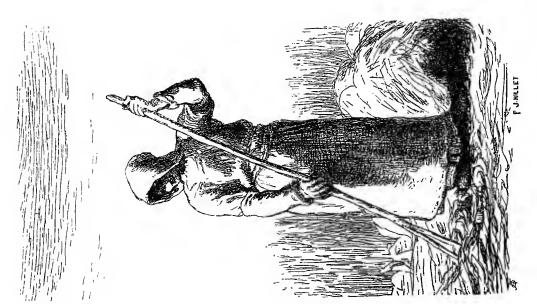




м 72

(Drawn by Millet on the Wood. Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)

(Drawn by Millet on the Wood. Engraved by Adrien Lavieille)



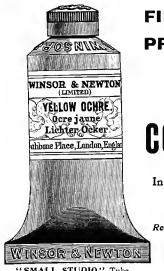
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CONTENTS OF PART I

TITLE PAGE

ESSAY ON "WOOD-ENGRAVING"

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ETCHING. "St. Germain L'Auxerrois." An original Plate expressly produced for this Work

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MONOTYPE IN COLOURS. "The Road by the Pond" Expressly produced for this Work

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PASTEL. "The Kid Giove." From the original Study By E. AMAN-JEAN WOOD-CUT. "The Old Bridge." From the Wood-By W. O. J. NIEUWENKAMP block

TINTED CHALK DRAWING. "Riverside Attrac-

tions, Paris." Expressly produced for this Work By G. DUPUIS

WATER-COLOUR. "A Sail!" From the original By JOSEF ISRAELS Drawing

CONTENTS OF PART II

AN ARTICLE ON LITHOGRAPHY

By JOSEPH PENNELL

And the following lilustrations

MEZZOTINT. "The Bather"

By MAX PIETSCHMANN

WATER-COLOUR, "Milan Cathedral"

By ALBERT GOODWIN, R.W.S.

SANGUINE DRAWING. "Study of a Head"

PASTEL. "London Bridge-Sunday Morning" By FRANK BRANGWYN

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AD. XX



